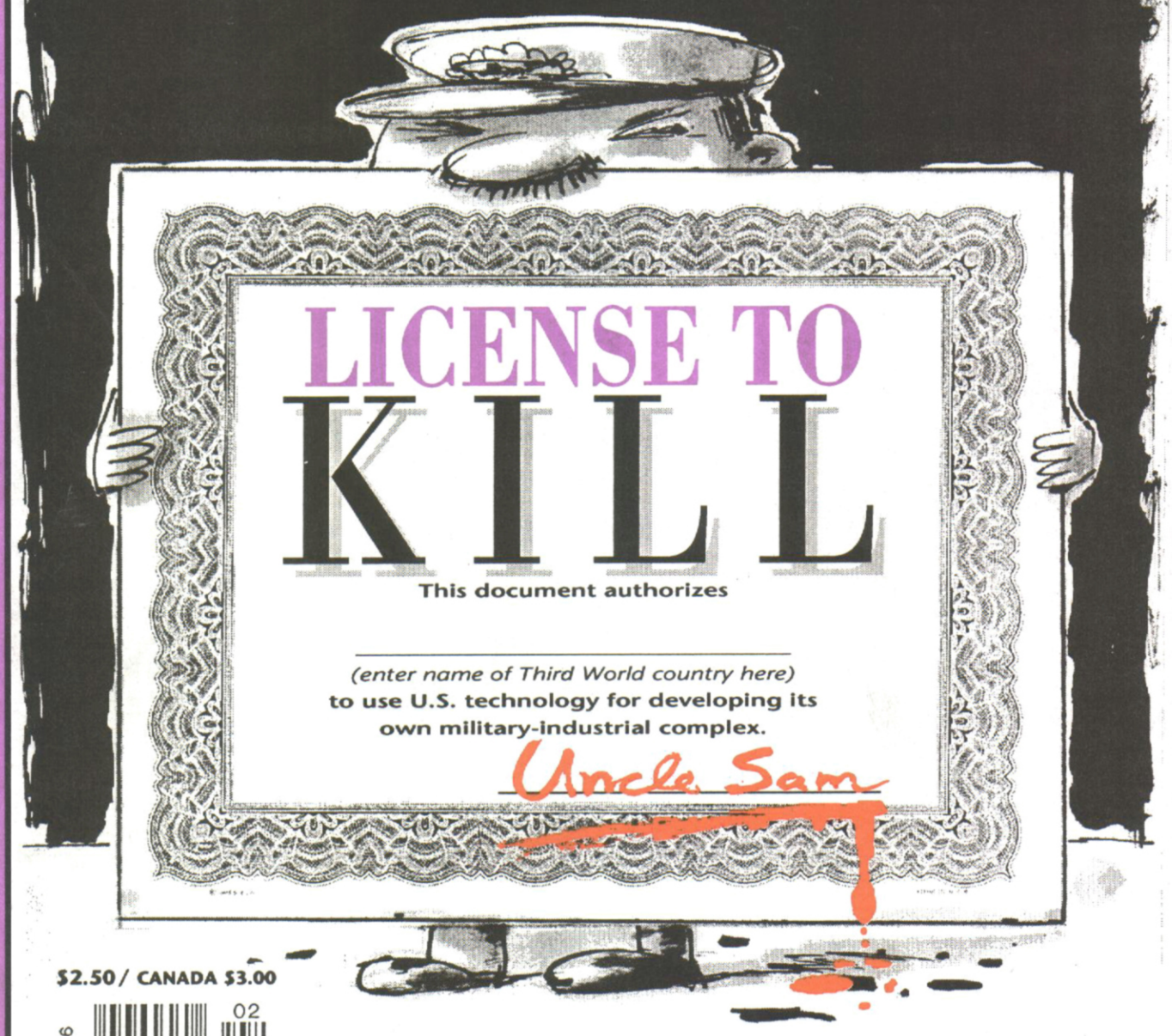
TOP STORY: NEW DANGER TO U.S. MILK SUPPLY

January 10 - 23, 1994

# In THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine




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Michael T. Klare reports, page 14

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EDITORIAL

# MAKING EFFECTIVE WELFARE REFORM

Bill Clinton appears determined to tackle two extraordinarily tough issues in 1994—health care and welfare reform. On welfare, Clinton is right on one point: "Ending welfare as we know it"—the president's carefully ambiguous phrase—is highly desirable. Even though "welfare," narrowly defined as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), represents only 1 percent of federal expenditures, it has few defenders. Partly because it is so unpopular, it has been underfunded and ineffective at helping poor people.

Over the past two decades the real value of AFDC benefits has dropped by 40 percent, and child poverty has increased by about one-third—to about four times the rate in France and 10 times that in Sweden. Poor people would obviously be even worse off without welfare, but simply raising benefits—even if it had been politically achievable—would not have eradicated the problems of poor families.

In any case, AFDC has been caught in a political conundrum, as University of Wisconsin poverty researcher Thomas Corbett has observed: people expect it to help children while discouraging their mothers' dependency on government handouts. It's easy to do one or the other—just spend more or cut all benefits—but damnably difficult to do both at once.

There's no single, magical welfare reform—a cause pursued by every president since Truman. Yet a few basic principles should guide public policy. First, guarantee work to all who are able to work. Second, make sure that work pays enough to remove a family from poverty. And finally, design public policies to help the poor on the inclusive model of social security. Inclusiveness means that government programs of income supports, child care, health care, education and training, and housing subsidies all should be as universal as possible. But they should be designed to maximize help for the most needy, either by progressively taxing benefits or reducing benefits as income rises.

Incorporating Medicaid within universal health care coverage is a good first step, though it would best be done with the government as the single insurer, rather than with big insurance companies, as in Clinton's plan. Likewise, Washington should provide financial support to expand the public school system to provide more comprehensive support from early childhood through adult education.

First, it's necessary to strengthen confidence in the system by reforming and equitably funding existing schools. At the same time, full-day pre-school should be universally available, starting at least at age three. Also, the schools—including community colleges—should work more extensively on the transition from school to work, including job placement as well as job training, partly funded by employers and students as well as government.

All American families, whether there are one or two parents, should be provided a basic stipend to support each child. Now only three in five poor children even receive AFDC benefits, a decline from four in five two decades ago. Like free public education, such child allowances—which are common in western Europe—reflect society's stake in its children. As family income increases, there would be a gradual reduction in the level of benefits but not in a way that discourages parents from working.

This basic child support allowance could be integrated with the refundable Earned Income Tax Credit, as former Minneapolis Mayor Donald Fraser advocated in an *In These Times* essay (Nov. 29, 1993). In addition, there should be an adequate allowance for child-care services that would be scaled back as income increased. The current adult income support under AFDC could be integrated into a broader income-support program for the unemployed, displaced workers and workers undergoing job retraining.

Clinton's expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit in the fiscal year 1994 budget was a significant step toward making work pay by reducing poverty among low-wage workers. The administration needs to adopt Labor Secretary Robert Reich's earlier proposals to raise and index the minimum wage.

For the really hard-core cases of long-term welfare dependency, there needs to be active intervention to provide counseling, support and extensive training, with compulsory performance requirements where needed. Obviously, policies for job creation and rebuilding inner-cities are essential for welfare reform. Yet in order for many ill-equipped individuals to find work, it will be necessary to create public service jobs or provide subsidies to employers.

Clinton seems likely to propose improving benefits for the working poor to support any transition from welfare. That's good but very modest. His proposals to enforce child support and combat teen pregnancy are well-intentioned—but old-hat and likely to have little effect. His plan to limit welfare to two years could easily be simply punitive or meaningless without more comprehensive programs.

Worst of all, the administration appears determined to fund any new programs by cutting old programs for the poor. Instead, if Clinton really wants to "end welfare as we know it," he should be prepared to abandon a narrow focus on the poor and shift toward more universal programs. It won't be cheap, but the long-term rewards of a more secure, productive and civil society are worth the price. ◀



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"...with liberty and justice for all"

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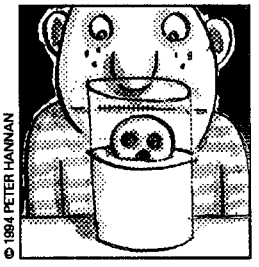
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# LETTERS

## Chronic depression

John Judis' "No help wanted" (*ITT*, Nov. 1) is noteworthy in that it cuts through the ecobabble that befogs much of the current press discourse on economic affairs. However, it's clear to me that much of the world faces an economic displacement not so much like the 1929-42 depression but like that of the 30-year era misnamed the "Gilded Age."

Then, as now with the ending of our unprecedented Cold War, the Civil War had recently ended. The burst of invention and innovation that began around 1844—Rostow's American takeoff—continued, changing the production process as well as displacing increased numbers of industrial and farm workers. The Republican Party formally repudiated Lincoln's concern for the worker and the farmer in April 1874 and entered the service of the nation's most affluent constituencies. The Democrats—disorganized by their divided loyalties to the Union—offered no effective response until well into the next century. Splinter parties—ineffectual, for the most part—proliferated.

The period from 1867 to 1897 has been characterized by economist Alvin Hansen as a long period of falling prices in which "depression was chronic in the U.S. and Great Britain, and to some extent in all countries." Economic indices for this country bear out his observation: For one, the wholesale price index fell from 160 to 75. Eight major downturns in the economy occurred in this period, one lasting for almost six years. While data concerning unemployment is sparse, narratives of this era reflect terrible privation among the families of displaced industrial and agricultural workers despite the declining cost of living. Workers who continued working often did so at wage reductions of as much as 25 percent. Nevertheless, a most conspicuous group of entrepreneurs, investors and financiers managed to benefit handsomely.

Again, in our time, we must cope with the brutal task of scaling back drastically our huge investment in the military-industrial complex: closing bases, reducing forces, terminating contracts, limiting research and curtailing weapons production and maintenance. Millions of persons are vulnerable to adverse displacement in this process. Over the next few years, adverse displacement is the grim prospect for a million industrial workers as well as several million workers in service occupations. The "computer revolution" in all its dimensions has just begun. Frederick Taylor's "time-motion" notions of the late-1800s have evolved a thousand-fold to encompass the whole process of producing, as well as serving. One significant change has come about in the last 120 years: Displaced persons don't have the obvious refuges of the 1800s. The service occupations—communications, sales and urban public service, to name a few—are beginning a significant shakeout of their own. And the American West has long been settled.

The scenario of a chronic post-bellum depression somewhat in the pattern of the "Gilded Age" seems more descriptive of our current situation than that of a whole society demoralized by the financial misfortunes of the stock market—such as was our fate from 1929 until the beginning of World War II. It remains for our political leadership on both sides of the aisle to understand the current situation and act in a humane and equitable manner to assist the economic casualties.

T.R. Snyder
Ogunquit, Maine

**SYLVIA** by Nicole Hollander






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## Reality check

One can't help wondering: If David Futrelle has absolutely no interest in JFK's assassination, (*ITT*, Dec. 13) why does he waste two pages of *In These Times*' valuable space telling us about it? Of course, when you're young, anything that happened prior to your own birth really didn't happen. But for those of us who were alive in 1963, it would have taken the credulity of Alice's friend the White Queen to have believed all the things we were told by the media on that Friday and Saturday.

On Friday, news reports were that the shots were believed to have come from in front of the president's car; the next day, the bullet had been put into reverse. The gun was first tentatively identified by "experts" as a German Mauser; the next day, it had become an Italian carbine. (As Mark Lane noted in *Rush to Judgment*, it was even stamped with the words "Made in Italy.") The doctor who performed the autopsy lectured the TV audience with pointer and chart, showing how the bullet had entered from the front and ("typically," he added) caused most of the damage at the exit site, the back of the skull. That was Friday: the day we were supposed to forget.

I suppose, to the young and bored, ancient conspiracy theories are less entertaining than *Jurassic Park*; but then we weren't looking for amusement when we turned on the news that day. No wonder we couldn't help noticing reports that came out later: The doctor who admitted he had been forced to destroy his autopsy report and rewrite it; the woman who identified Oswald as the man she saw shooting Officer Tippett, and then admitted later that she saw the shooting from behind the assailant, got only a glimpse of the man's profile, but decided after being shown Oswald's photo repeatedly by police that "he must be the man." Nor did anyone manage to explain to us the fact that someone resembling Oswald was seen distributing "Fair Play for Cuba" pamphlets, causing a disturbance as if to draw attention to himself in a restaurant, and driving a car (which Oswald didn't and couldn't), all at times when he was known to be elsewhere?

Futrelle is impressed by Oswald's weird personality. So, probably, were a lot of people, perhaps among them the Russians who sent him home as an inept spy; perhaps even those who decided he'd make a good fall guy: Who better than a presumably obnoxious personality no one was likely to miss?

Still, I suspect that the mothers of soldiers being sent to Vietnam were saddened, if not entertained, when Kennedy's efforts to bring about an end to hostilities were replaced by LBJ's decision to escalate the conflict. Parents of soldiers are not usually looking for amusement.

Dorothy Ferrier
Warren, Conn.

## Racism

With vehement indignation and a protestation that he is "deeply opposed to anti-Semitism," Andy Feeny rebukes my letter commenting on Salim Muwakkil's article about the anti-rap movement among some leaders of the black community (*ITT*, Dec. 13).

He selected and focused his arguments skillfully, ignoring the fact, for example, that my primary objection to the anti-rappers was their nationalist selectivity. They were angry at rap denigration of black women but not the denigration of all women. They ignored the violent homophobia and the almost equally virulent anti-Asian and anti-Semitic racism. (Perhaps Feeny is not "deeply opposed" to these aspects of rap.)

According to a recent opinion poll, 17 percent of Americans harbor strong sentiments of anti-Semitism. But that figure was distorted by the fact that 37 percent of blacks held such sentiments. This latter figure is a cause of concern to me not just as a Jew but, even more, as an American.

No, Feeny, I did not suffer personally at Crown Heights, nor did I suffer personally in the Holocaust. Nor did I realize that only those who suffer from a lynching had a right to respond with indignation. Even if I did not live in New York City, I would be indignant at a New York mayor who cried out immediately (and justly) at attacks on blacks in Bensonhurst and Howard Beach, but who after the lynching of a Jew by black rioters shouting Nazi and KKK slogans did nothing for three days while giving the rioters an opportunity "to let off steam" by beating up people they encountered on the streets or pulled out of automobiles that were stopped for red lights. With the not-guilty verdict against a clearly guilty lyncher, the mayor proclaimed, "The jury has spoken."

I can remember how 40 years ago black leaders used to call for learning from the Jewish community how to mobilize against racism. Nowadays Feeny might read Tony Brown's call for blacks to study the Confucian family, work and study values from the Korean community. He might also pay heed to calls from black leaders for combating teen-age pregnancy, drug addiction, and black-on-black violence, as well as the recent Baptist convention call for dealing with "black men who do not want to work."

In my letter, I asserted that rap music represents a glorification of such destructive evils. If Feeny places the black humanistic jazz contribution on a level with with rap, that's his problem.

Arthur D. Kahn
Brooklyn, N.Y.

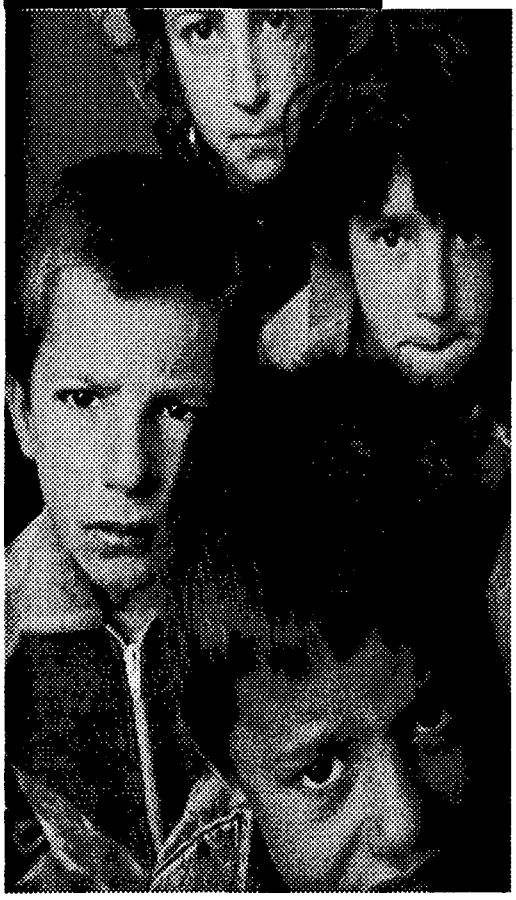
## Correction:

Last-minute editorial additions introduced two errors into Stephanie Rosenfeld's story on the Chilean elections (*ITT*, Nov. 29). Chilean Congresswoman-elect Isabel Allende is not, as we reported, the novelist Isabel Allende, who lives in California. And our description of Chile's complex party system as a "two party pact system" should have read "multi-party, two-pact system"—as the rest of the story made clear.



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# InSHORT



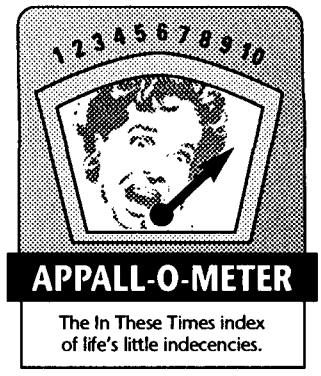
## KURDS IN CRISIS

The vicious cycle of Turkish state terrorism and Kurdish counter-terrorism is continuing with mounting human and economic costs.

The Kurdish people are the world's largest national group without a country. The majority live in Turkey, where for 70 years the government has systematically attempted to deny them a national identity, banning the Kurdish dialect and insisting that the Kurds are "mountain Turks." Fighting between the government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (known by the acronym PKK) has left more than10,500 people dead since 1984. In 1993 alone, more than 4,000 people died—1,500 of them civilians.

The latest round of bloodshed was touched off in late October, when Turkish security forces carried out an anti-Kurd sweep in the village of Lice in southeastern Turkey. A delegation of European deputies and journalists who visited the area to investigate found that the Turkish army attacked the village with flamethrowers, completely destroying it in a 10-hour assault. Turkish army headquarters and official buildings in Lice had not been touched.

Turkish authorities—who in November briefly detained a delegation of British trade unionists investigating human-rights abuses in the area—said 13 Kurds died at Lice. But a Belgian doctor in the delegation said hundreds had been killed and many others hospitalized. According to a Kurdish agency report, some 160 people died in the attack; another report put the figure at 380. Most villagers fled to Diyarbakir; only 1,500 out of 10,000 inhabitants remained.




By Woody Igou

## Appall-O-Meter 1993 Awards

*A look back at some of the indecencies noted in this column during the past year.*

### Most Appalling Award

**A replica of Pol Pot's bronzed baby shoes goes to:**

- **The Orlando, Fla., mother** who repeatedly bit her 2-year-old child in an effort to give the child AIDS .




- **The Oakland crowd that** urged a woman's attacker to kill her as she was stabbed to death.




- **Pat Robertson, for claiming** that Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida because of its sins.




### Altered Reality Award

**A tape loop of Marshall McLuhan screaming goes to:**

- **Sony, for a commercial in which a child at the Grand Canyon only identifies it correctly by pointing to a television picture of it.**
- **Dodge, for managing to create an entire TV series based upon a new product—the Viper.**



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○ Geraldo Rivera, for offering "post show therapy" for those guests twisted by the mock drama of his program.

## Golden Spoon Award

A week-old Jack in the Box burger goes to China for:
○ Allowing politically motivated cannibalism to flourish in the '60s.
○ The fourth-grade Chinese teacher who forced students to eat cow dung as punishment in the classroom.

## New Uses for the Human Body Award

Signed copies of the book *I Pulled a Box Car with My Nipple Ring* go to:
○ Transvestite prostitutes in Thailand who laced their breasts with sedatives so that they could rob patrons.
○ The bar owner in Australia who allowed patrons to eat fruit salad out of topless waitresses' belly buttons.
○ Japan, for gracefully allowing the return of 20,000 severed noses to Korea.

## Impaired Driving Award

A free tune-up from Joey Buttafuoco for:
○ The Russian driver who drove around with a dead passenger rather than stop a shopping trip in Poland.
○ Preacher Sammy Rodriguez, who crashed a carload of 19 naked church members into a tree during a bizarre "pilgrimage."

APPALL-O-METER SCALE
1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. *Gangrenous venality*
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse



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**Kurdish children and spent mortar shells in the town of Cisre in southeastern Turkey.**

The attack followed the death of a top Turkish military commander in the area. Turkish officials blamed the PKK for his death, but official reports regarding the circumstances were contradictory. President Suleyman Demirel eventually stated that the general was killed by "an accidental bullet," essentially absolving the PKK.

The PKK response to the destruction of Lice was the widely reported attack on Turkish targets in six European countries on November 4. Turkish embassies, banks, travel agencies and newspapers were hit by firebombs, stones and sledgehammers. One man was killed and some 20 injured.

Last March, the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire but refused to disarm without a peace accord with the government, which refuses to negotiate with "terrorists." Despite Western pressure the government failed to respond to the PKK offer. Instead, Turkish security forces used the ceasefire to move in and destroy the PKK infrastructure, forcing the evacuation of 20 villages and killing 90 PKK members prior to a widely reported but unauthorized PKK attack on some Turkish soldiers in late May. Human-rights activists claim that more than 700 villages have been evacuated over past years, and most have been burned down.

And reports from Turkey indicate that the violence in the southeast is continuing. Turkey is divided on the solution. A recent poll found that about half the population favors talks with the PKK. Like late President Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister Tensu Ciller reportedly favors a policy of conciliation but has been blocked by hardliners and most of the Turkish military.

Turkish officials had been concerned that the Israeli-Palestinian accord could lead to renewed pressure on Ankara to resolve the issues of Kurdistan and Cyprus. But Ciller stated in late October that her visit to the United States earlier in the month "was positive and productive as the United States accepted the PKK as terrorist group and supported Turkey's struggle." According to one Turkish newspaper report, the United States has agreed to step up the supply of suplus U.S. materiel to Turkey. It has also agreed in principle to the sale of tanker aircraft to the Turkish air force.

—A. Rice



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# FRIENDS FOREVER

To most in Europe, the name of Russian neofascist Vladimir Zhirinovsky was unknown until his startling success in the December elections. (See story on page 28.) Not so in the camps of the German ultra-right. Zhirinovsky, leader of the "Liberal Democratic Party," was the German right's candidate of choice, a like-minded friend and political ally.

"A Germany in which niggers, Arabs and Turks determine Germany's fate is no longer a European country," Zhirinovsky told the German People's Union's (DVU) *National-Zeitung*. Zhirinovsky and DVU leader Gerhard Frey share the dream of a common German-Russian border. Poland would be divided between "the two great peoples of Europe."

Frey extolled the Russian right's performance as a victory for the entire European right and the onset of a new era of German-Russian cooperation. "Our common hopes have been fulfilled," he beamed.

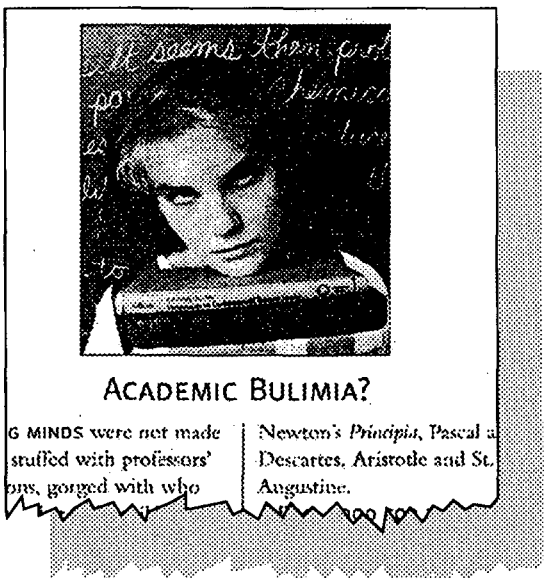
Last summer he told *Nation & Europa*, the influential "intellectual" organ of the German ultra-right, of the need for a German-Russian alliance to "defend white Europe." Russia, he also told *Nation & Europa*, "could only be saved through dictatorship."

In July, *Nation & Europa's* Eastern Europe "expert," Wolfgang Strauss, visited Zhirinovsky in Moscow. He told Strauss of the "fatal danger" facing Europe: "Islam isn't standing at our doorstep, it's marching through the streets of Europe's cities. It is taking over Christian Europe." Germany and Russia must band together to protect "white Europe."

Zhirinovsky has admirers across the spectrum of the German right. When he appears at DVU rallies in Bavaria, his theme is reconciliation: "Germans and Russians: friends forever."

—Paul Hockenos

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT




An advertising strategy that brings new meaning to the word "tasteless": Thomas Aquinas College, a small California school specializing in the Great Books, presents itself in a recent *American Spectator* ad as a cure for "academic bulimia." The ad, which features a picture of a thin, harried looking young woman burdened with a stack of books, argues that "young minds were not made to be stuffed with professors' opinions, gorged with who knows what indigestible concoctions served up from an endless menu of unrelated topics. They were not made to regurgitate those opinions on exams—unsatisfied, undernourished."

—David Futrelle

## MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

### No more Mr. Nice Guy

**With new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) head Reed Hundt settling in, the agency is taking a tough line. It has asked some 35 cable systems to justify their pricing systems, to see if they comply with the 1992 cable law. As the Dec. 27, 1993, "Media Beat" pointed out, cable systems have been creatively interpreting the law, finding ways to increase their prices and blame it on the government.**

### Good news, bad news

**Holiday season court decisions have put candy and coals into the stockings of public-interest advocates. Cable TV public-access users were cheered when, in late November, an appeals court ruled that cable operators could not censor access programming. Moralizing politicians had inserted a last-minute provision into the 1992 cable law allowing operators to ban offensive programming. At the time, cynics in Congress dismissed the provision's importance because "the courts will overturn it." Finally, one court did— after thousands of unpaid hours of legal work and grassroots organizing.**

**In another appeals court, advocates of the Fairness Doctrine didn't do as well. The Fairness Doctrine, first enunciated by the FCC in 1949, required broadcasters both to air controversial programming and to air it fairly; in decades**



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of service, it kept open small windows for public debate. The Reagan-era FCC suspended the Fairness Doctrine in 1987, but maintained the provisions dealing with elections. In December, an appeals court found that Congress had never explicitly put the Doctrine into law. The fight goes on in Congress to do so.

### Taxpayers like you

The Public Broadcasting System's budget to make programs has never been higher—10 percent above its 1992 levels. Money is up from viewers and even more from taxpayers, and down from corporations, which still provide almost a quarter of the total funding.

Corporate dollars, however, are the most likely to dictate actual program design, because they are tied to particular program ideas or themes. Nonetheless, this drop in corporate subsidies is worrisome to PBSers, who are desperately looking for ways to make the service more appealing to corporate contributors and less tied to Congress' purse-strings. The dip may be a further indication of public television's slipping hold on the upscale audience that corporations have traditionally found so difficult to reach. Cable and video are now also reaching that market.

At the same time, PBS is proudly, and justifiably, touting its morning block of kids' educational programming. Public TV may find a unique niche in educational service. But it's not a niche that corporations are racing to fund.

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# FIRST THE GOOD NEWS

Attempting to assess the possible military risks of a confrontation with North Korea, the *New York Times* notes that "the widespread view" among top Pentagon aides "is that the U.S. and South Korean forces could, with timely reinforcements, successfully repulse a North Korean attack, although some administration officials acknowledge that Seoul would probably be destroyed in the process and that millions of refugees would be sent streaming south."

—David Futrelle

# WOLF WHISTLE

"I want men, male care, male sexual attention. ... Male sexual attraction is the sun in which I bloom. The male body is ground and shelter to me, my lifelong destination." (Naomi Wolf, *Fire With Fire.*) "With a plaintive sigh she threw her arms around his neck and held him with all her strength. Oh how content she was with this, nothing more, just this closeness, this dear affection. She felt sheltered, protected, safe from everything and everyone. ..." (Judith Krantz, *Princess Daisy.*)

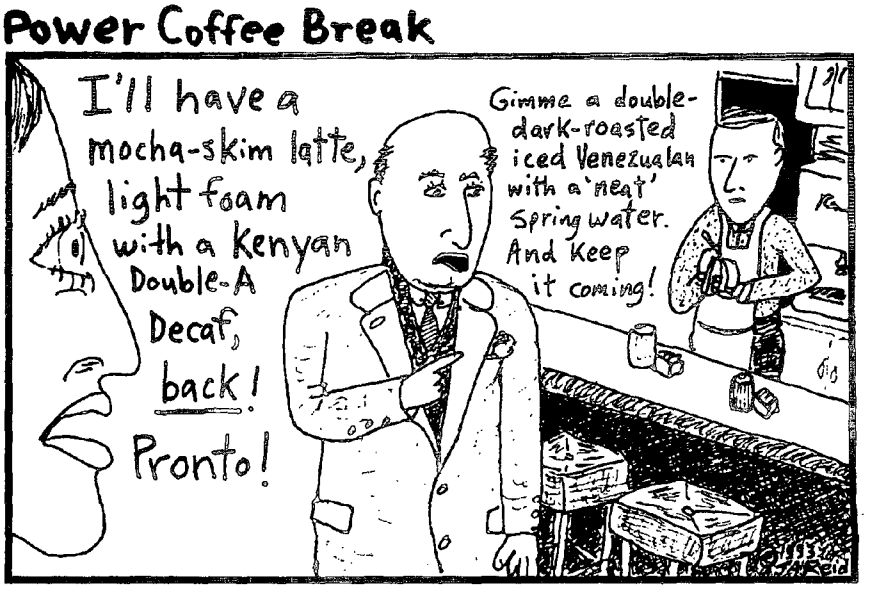
—David Futrelle

# EATING HIS WORDS

Demonstrating the kind of multicultural sensitivity one might expect from a senator whose constituency is one-third African-American, Ernest "Fritz" Hollings (D-SC) recently reflected on the intercontinental appeal of Swiss food. "Everybody likes to go to Geneva," he remarked. "I used to do it for the Law of the Sea conferences and you'd find these potentates from down in Africa, you know, rather than eating each other, they'd just come up and get a good square meal in Geneva."

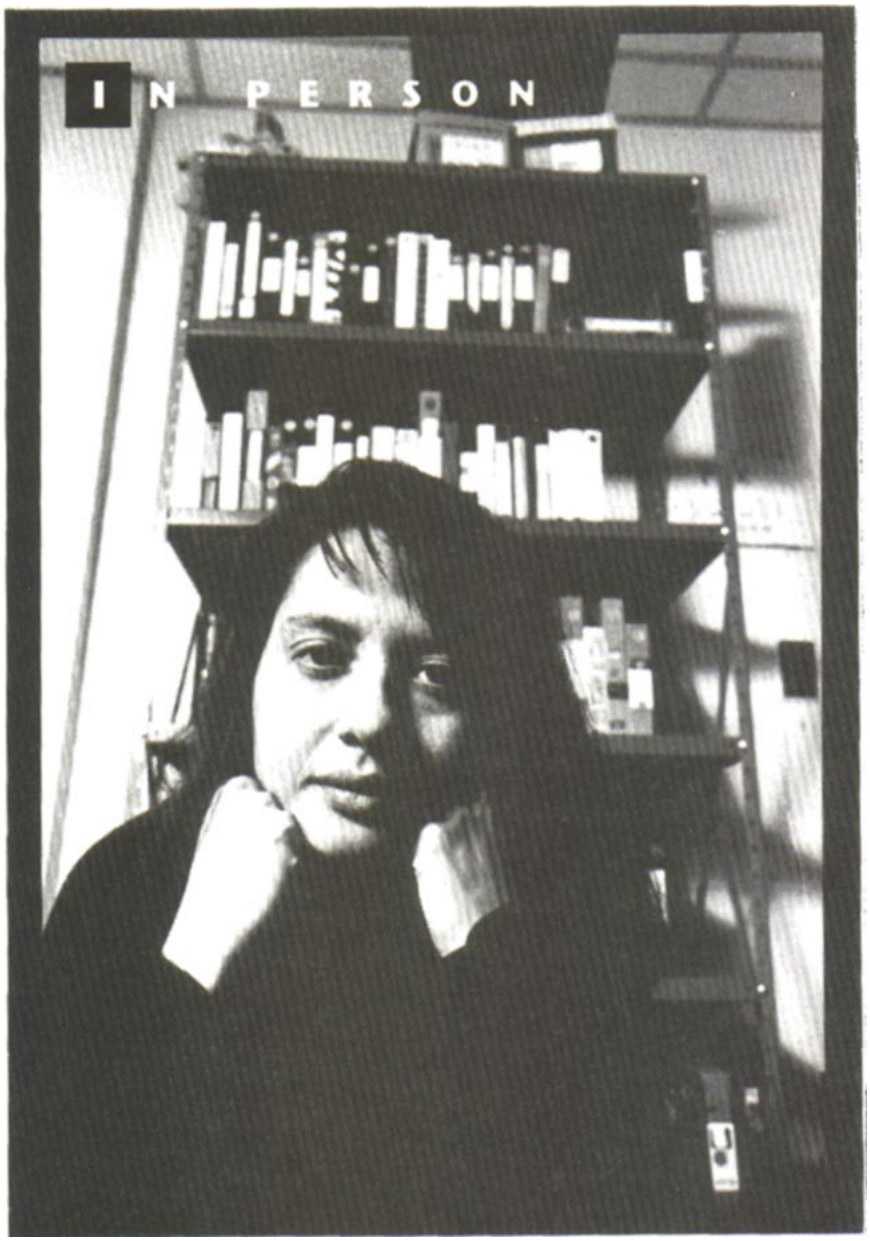
—David Futrelle

**ROUGH CUTS** **By JA Reid**






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# DIALOGUE, PLEASE!

*Dalida Maria Benfield videotapes for change.*

It's getting late on a Thursday evening, and Dalida Maria Benfield is trying to start a discussion. At 5 foot 4, she creates a less-than-imposing presence at the front of a Northwestern University auditorium. About 30 people, mostly women, have gathered to see the 1993 Women in the Director's Chair touring film and video show, put together by 29-year-old Benfield and her staff of three. Behind her is the full-sized screen, on which nine short works by women around the country have just played. The films center on issues of race, class and gender, introducing the audience to HIV-positive women prisoners, Latina high school students and a feminist-cum-circus star wearing a full beard.

"Does anyone have a response to what we've seen?" Benfield asks the audience. In the silence that follows, she tucks a strand of hair behind an ear and tries again. "Any comments at all?"

## ETC.

By Miles Harvey

### Hall of Shame

*Multinational Monitor*, a Ralph Nader-founded magazine that tracks the misdeeds of corporations, has released its annual list of America's 10 worst companies. In the December issue, Russell Mokhiber looks at the evil accomplishments of those in the "1993 Corporate Hall of Shame."

The list, compiled in alphabetical order, begins with Diamond Walnut, the Stockton, Calif., firm that three years ago promised to "stick by" workers when they agreed to wage concessions. But instead of sticking by them, the company stuck it to them. After Diamond Walnut demanded more concessions, the workers went on strike. The company then replaced them. (See *In These Times*, Nov. 15, 1993.)

Dow Corning makes *Multinational Monitor*'s list thanks to its involvement in the production of potentially dangerous silicone breast implants. Public Citizen, another Nader group, has urged the federal government to bring criminal charges against Dow Corning for filing a false safety report on silicone breast implants.

DuPont, which made the 1991 Hall of Shame for being the nation's worst polluter, returns this year for producing a fungicide called Benalte that allegedly caused a widespread kill-off of American farmers' crops. Jack in the Box was responsible for bacteria-laden burgers that killed four children and left more than 500 other people sick. According to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has done "virtually nothing" to improve meat



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safety since the disaster.
A Prudential limited-partnership scheme ripped off investors to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Then the company tried to offer a two-cents-on-the-dollar settlement to the scam's victims.
As *ITT*'s Pat Aufderheide has regularly reported, RJR Nabisco is trying to hook kids on cigarettes. Since the company introduced its "Joe Camel" ad campaign in 1987, Camel's share of the under-18 market has risen from 0.5 percent to an astonishing 32.8 percent. Aufderheide has also written about the threat of monopolies in the tele-commications industry, exemplified by cable giant TCI's attempts to take over Bell Atlantic. *Multinational Monitor* points out that TCI has an ugly record of trying to eliminate its competition.
Tate & Lyle, the British conglomerate that owns the A.E. Staley company makes the Hall of Shame list for its lockout of workers at the Staley plant in Decatur, Ill. (See *In These Times*, April 5, 1993 and Nov. 15, 1993.)
For 20 years, Texaco pumped oil from the Ecuadoran rain forest. After extracting more than 1 billion barrels of crude oil, the third-largest U.S. oil company headed home—leaving behind toxic waste pits, oil spills and poisoned communities.
And finally, Waste Technology Industries built one of the world's largest—and potentially most dangerous—waste incinerators 400 yards from an elementary school in East Liverpool, Ohio. (See *In These Times*, May 3, 1993.) Despite campaign promises to the contrary, the Clinton administration has given the facility the OK to operate.

The quiet persists. Several people twist around in their seats to see if someone might offer a comment, a question, anything. Undaunted, Benfield takes the reins again, her voice gentle but prodding. "Watching films is like an enactment of multiculturalism," she says into the quiet, dimly lit auditorium. "We have to travel to the creative spaces of the various filmmakers to gain understanding."

Later, the audience long gone, Benfield notes the difficulty of getting people to speak. "There's always a tension, trying to get a participatory dialogue going," she says. "But when people aren't talking, I try to put ideas out there, hoping what's happening in each person's head is an internal dialogue of sorts."

Fighting silence is nothing new for Benfield, who is herself an independent media artist. When she entered New York University's film school in 1982, her work was met largely with silence. "I went to school with boys, and they were interested in entirely different things than I was. I felt so totally unable to be creative. I used to help them out by acting in their films, but their idea of a woman's role was to take me out to Hoboken and kill me on the docks."

Twelve years later, it appears Benfield has hit her stride. Her work has earned her three regional fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. She's taught at Chicago's School of the Art Institute, been an artist in residence, and received numerous awards. In August, she was appointed program director for Women in the Director's Chair, an organization created to provide visibility to women's work in independent film and video.

Benfield, whose mother immigrated from Panama in the '60s, has focused her efforts on establishing community among Latina women, who she feels are underrepresented in the media and remain isolated by sexism, racism and economic oppression. "Latinas work hard to take care of their families and to survive," she says. "They have significant relationships with one another, but these are not at all politicized. What I'm envisioning is a community of self-determining Latinas, where we can work to improve our situation and encourage each other to realize our possibilities."

Her recent video, *Women of Pilsen*, brings together the narratives of 10 women living in Pilsen, a Chicano neighborhood on Chicago's near South Side. In a collaborative effort, the women helped to plan and edit the video. The resulting oral history explores the diversity of the Latina experience, as the women reflect on their neighborhood, their mothers, their personal and cultural histories, their religion and their various identities. She believes her emphasis on minority women is a needed alternative to predominantly white feminism. "There are a lot of women thinking about how to move ahead the situation of women," says Benfield. "This is important, of course, but it's also necessary to raise feminist consciousness about race and class."

The key to activism, she maintains, is dialogue. On any given day, one is likely to find Benfield engrossed in conversation. She's talking to gang members in Pilsen as part of her newest video project. She's working with the Women in the Director's Chair outreach program, talking to HIV-positive inmates at a women's prison.

"For women and for Latinos," says Benfield. "It's important that we value our experience and find a public space for it, not as intellectual ethnography, but to create a better understanding of our political relationships. Our culture and our everyday lives should be the subjects of our analysis and our art-making."

—Sarah Corbett



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THE FIRST STONE

# Mucking with milk

By Joel Bleifuss

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recent decision to allow artificial bovine growth hormone (BGH) into the human food chain is yet another example of the Clinton administration's predilection for putting corporate profits before the public good.

When this synthetic hormone is injected into cows, it has the potential to increase their milk production by as much as 20 percent. But BGH-derived milk poses potential human health risks—risks that the FDA has decided to ignore. And if Congress, as expected, allows BGH on the market, within a year American children will be drinking milk that comes from cows that have been injected with this inadequately tested drug.

BGH residue itself apparently does not pose a direct risk to humans. However, because the use of BGH puts an extra stress on a cow's system, it leads to an increased incidence of udder infections—infections that require treatment with antibiotic drugs. Traces of these antibiotics show up in the milk. But since animal antibiotics are poorly regulated, there is no way of knowing what ingredients of the antibiotic soup are ending up in the milk. It is known that disease-causing organisms can develop resistance to antibiotics. In a study published last March in the *Journal of Food Protection*, microbiologists at Rutgers University reported that the FDA's "safe levels" of antibiotic residues promote antibiotic-resistance. The scientists concluded that "greater emphasis should be placed on keeping the milk supply residue-free rather than reliance on maintaining the working residue levels suggested by the term 'safe levels.'" ("The First Stone," May 3, 1993.)

Perhaps most significantly, BGH causes cows to produce milk that contains greatly increased levels of a natural substance called insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1). The cow and human versions of IGF-1 are molecularly identical. In the human body, IGF-1 mediates the effects of the human growth hormone. Elevated levels of IGF-1 cause acromegaly, a disease characterized by the abnormal enlargement of hands, feet, nose and chin. And according to a 1987 study published in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, increased levels of IGF-1 have been linked to the development of colon tumors and cancer.

The FDA, however, maintains that people who drink milk containing increased levels of IGF-1 will suffer no ill effects. To back up this claim, the FDA published the results of a Monsanto rat study in *Science* in August 1990.

Last May, Michael Hansen, a biologist at Consumers Union, prepared a critique of Monsanto's IGF-1 study, which he sent to the FDA. In their experiment, Monsanto researchers fed three test groups of young rats three different doses of IGF-1. The experiment, Hansen points out, lasted only 14 days. The male rats fed the high doses of IGF-1 experienced a "statistically significant increase" in body weight, liver weight and tibia length, according to the Monsanto study, while there was only an increase of tibia length in the male rats fed low doses. FDA and Monsanto scientists explained away these growth increases and concluded that ingestion of IGF-1 "had no effect" on the rats.

The rats in the Monsanto test groups were fed IGF-1 orally to see whether it could be absorbed through the intestines. The experiment also used three other rat groups as controls. Instead of being fed the IGF-1 orally, two of the control groups were injected with IGF-1, each group with a different dose. In the control group that was injected with the higher dose of IGF-1, both the male and female rats experienced statistically significant altered growth. In the rats that were injected with the lower dose of IGF-1, the males experienced increased growth of the kidney, liver and tibia, while females showed no effects.

A third control group was injected with a pig growth hormone. The idea of using this "known growth promotant" was to give scientists a point of comparison. But Hansen points out that the rats injected with pig growth hormone were given a dose 20 times greater then the one administered to the control group that received the larger injection of IGF-1, and 80 times greater than the group that received the smaller injection of IGF-1. In his letter to the FDA, Hansen, who holds a PhD in biology, points out that a "major problem with the experimental design is the small amounts of IGF-1 administred," both orally and by injection. Furthermore, the Monsanto researchers used one way of expressing the amount of the IGF-1 administered to the test groups, and another way for the control groups. Hansen argues this made meaningful comparison difficult—and led unwary readers to conclude that the oral doses were higher than the injected doses, which was not the case.



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Far from the FDA's determination that IGF-1 had "no effect" on the rats, Hansen concludes that "given the problem with relatively low doses of oral IGF-1 and that the experiment only lasted for two weeks, the fact that there were any statistically significant effects should be quite upsetting. ... To say that the health of a nation is assured when only one oral feeding study with normal rats has been done and it produced ambiguous results, is not, in our view, 'sound science.'"

Hansen believes the FDA and Monsanto presented the findings of their IGF-1 experiment in such a way as to make BGH look harmless. As Hansen writes in his letter to the FDA, "This is particularly disturbing given the potential connection of IGF-1 to cancer and tumor growth."

"It looks to me that Monsanto's experiment was designed not to find any BGH effect," Hansen told me. "I don't see how the FDA can get around my critique of the stucture of their experiment."

Barbara Seaman is covering the BGH issue for *Ms.* magazine. Seaman is the author of *Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones*, a 1977 book about DES and other estrogens. (DES, like BGH, is a synthetic hormone. But scientists stress that the two have significant differences, and warn against making overly generalized comparisons between them.) In the '40s, '50s and '60s, DES was commonly given to women to prevent miscarraiges and/or ensure a healthy pregnancy. DES is now known to cause a rare form of vaginal cancer in daughters of the women who took the drug. It also causes reproductive abnormalities in both daughters and sons, as well as an increase in breast cancer in the mothers.

In the '30s, experiments with rats clearly indicated that DES caused cancers and reproductive abnormalities that were similar to those that later showed up in humans. But that evidence was ignored.

Seaman is schocked that the FDA has decided to overlook the questions posed by the Monsanto rat studies and grant approval to BGH. She is particularly worried about the possible ill-effects IGF-1 in milk poses to pregnant women, unborn babies and nursing infants. "I have this terrible feeling of *deja vu*," says Seaman.

For its part, the FDA has not responded to Hansen's critique. It continues promoting the Monsanto study as proof that increased levels of IGF-1 cause no harm. In so doing, the FDA is also promoting Monsanto's fortunes. The chemical conglomerate has sunk an estimated $1 billion into BGH—and if Monsanto does not get its artificial hormone on the market, that is money down the drain. ("The First Stone," Sept. 20, 1993.)

One of the most powerful proponents of BGH is the *New York Times*' Jane Brody. A compliant consumer of industry propaganda, Brody launched an all-out defense of BGH in her November 17 "Personal Health" column. She claimed that opposition to BGH was "instigated more by ignorance, nostalgia and a Luddite view of technology than by understanding and actual facts." Showing her own ignorance of the actual facts, Brody falsely maintained that IGF-1 "would be dismantled by digestive enzymes" and that "it had no effect when given orally to rats."

Brody seems to have relied on the FDA and Monsanto for this information. Hansen says she did not contact the Consumers Union in New York, which has been a persistent BGH critic. But perhaps Consumers Union is at fault for not contacting her. Someone should have realized that Brody's preferred method of reporting is to wait for industry press releases. As she says on her office answering machine, "If you are a public relations representative with a story idea, please send it to me by mail or messenger at the *New York Times*."

*In the next issue, I will examine recent developments in the spread of mad cow disease and the potential role that BGH could play in the spread of this disease.*

**THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH** **by Peter Hannan**






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ARMS CONTROL

# License to kill

## *How the United States is building up military-industrial complexes in the Third World.*

By Michael T. Klare

Since the Persian Gulf conflict, there has been a growing debate in this country over the costs and benefits of arms sales to the Third World. For some analysts, this trade entails a dangerous push to regional arms races in areas of recurring conflict; for others, it represents a welcome opportunity to buffer some of the income and job losses produced by the downturn in domestic military spending. (See *In These Times*, Nov. 15, 1993.)

Largely missing from this debate, however, is the fact that major U.S. arms transactions rarely involve munitions alone. Increasingly, such sales incorporate the technology to produce weapons along with the weapons themselves. As a result, many Third World countries now produce a wide variety of modern weapons, and some have become arms exporters on their own—thereby adding to the global glut in implements of war.

A notable case-in-point is Turkey. Until recently, Turkey was wholly dependent on foreign sources for its supply of front-line weaponry. Now, however, it is producing a wide range of modern military systems under license from U.S. firms and is beginning to export arms to other countries. In 1987, for instance, Turkey became the first Third World country to produce an advanced U.S. fighter (the Lockheed F-16 Falcon) in its own factories, and in 1991 it became the first such country to sell locally produced U.S. fighters to another Third World country (Egypt). Turkey is also building UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, Multiple-Launch Rocket Systems, the Stinger anti-aircraft missile and a wide variety of other U.S. munitions.

Nor is Turkey the only Third World nation Washington has helped to develop a modern, diversified arms production complex. Such assistance was first extended to Iran and Israel in the early '70s, and later provided to Egypt, South Korea and Taiwan. Egypt now produces the M-1A1 Abrams tank, the most advanced in the U.S. inventory, while South Korea is gearing up to produce F-16s and UH-60s and Taiwan is beginning to produce FFG-7 (Oliver Perry) type missile frigates. The United States is also contributing to the development of modern arms industries in Argentina, Indonesia and Singapore.

In seeking to develop modern arms industries, these countries are driven by several motives. For some countries, the primary goal is to reduce their dependence on external arms suppliers, thus increasing their capacity to survive (or initiate) conflict on their own. For others, the objective is national pride—to demonstrate that the country in question has come of age as a modern industrial power—or a desire to stimulate the emergence of high-tech civilian industries. Whatever the motive (and usually several are operating simultaneously), these countries must import key technologies from abroad to jumpstart the development of modern military industries.

To acquire U.S. technology, countries often demand that any arms purchase agreements they sign with U.S. firms be accompanied by the transfer of advanced manufacturing technologies. In some cases, such transfers take the form of a coproduction agreement, whereby the U.S. supplier provides a firm in the recipient country with the know-how to produce all or part of the weapon in question. Alternatively, the U.S. firm can award a manufacturing license to a foreign company and provide that company with varying degrees of technical assistance.

By agreeing to such arrangements, the United States is assuming a direct role in the creation, in numerous Third



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**A wounded man in Sarajevo. Weapons produced by a number of Third World countries have made it possible for combatants in the former Yugoslavia to evade a U.N. arms embargo.**

World countries, of the sort of military-industrial complex that took root here (and in the former Soviet Union) in the early Cold War era. Clearly, this process has military, political and economic consequences of a rather different order than those associated with the sale of finished weapons alone.

For one thing, the sale of technology allows the recipient to progressively diminish its dependence on external arms suppliers and thus to pursue a more independent (and possibly aggressive) foreign policy. Such sales also enable the recipient nation to become an arms exporter on its own, and thus to equip other states—including those that might be barred from receiving U.S. arms directly because of security or human rights considerations. And there is also the risk that technologies transferred in this fashion will be employed in the development of weapons of mass destruction, or of the delivery vehicles used to carry such munitions.

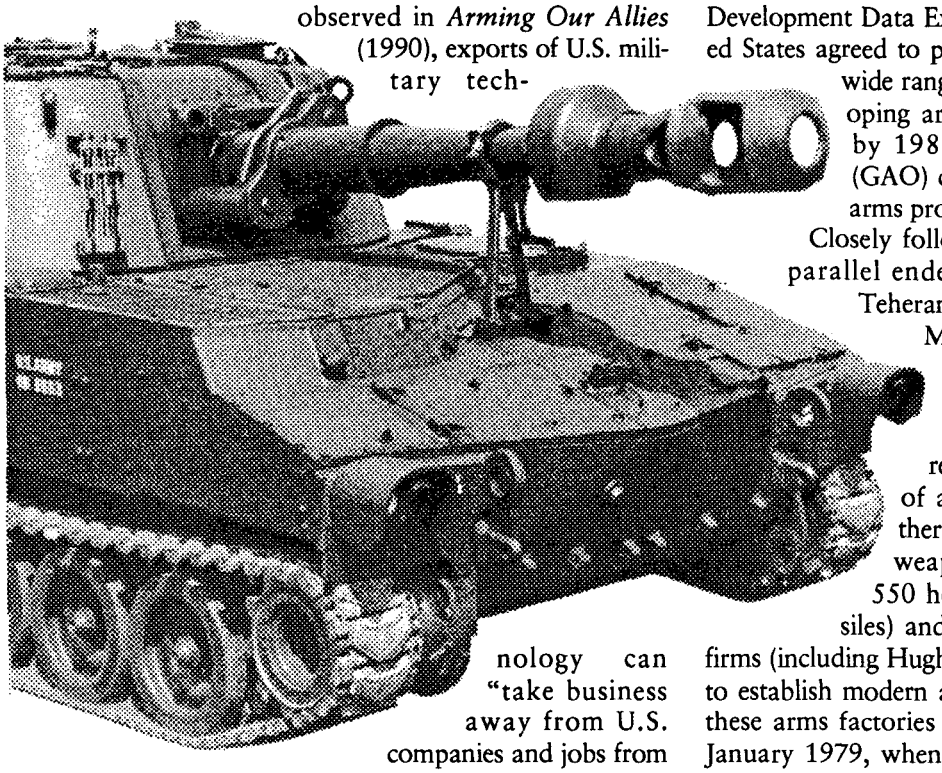
Only in the wake of the Cold War have these dangers received any serious attention in the United States. In *Global Arms Trade* (1991), the congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) observed that U.S. exports of military technology have "contributed to the emergence of numerous centers of advanced defense industry" in Europe, Asia and the Mideast, and that "each new center is capable of transferring technology and selling weapons to additional countries." Inevitably, the result of this process is "the grad-



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ual and collective loss of control over the destination and disposition of potent weapons emanating from many different parts of the world."

In an earlier report, the OTA considered another set of problems arising from such transfers: the danger that recipient countries could divert U.S. military technology (especially "dual-use" technology with civilian as well as military applications) to their civilian industries, and use it to enhance the competitiveness of their products in international market. "From a national perspective," the OTA observed in *Arming Our Allies* (1990), exports of U.S. military technology can "take business away from U.S. companies and jobs from U.S. workers, and transfer valuable technology to competitors that may later be used to penetrate civilian markets in the United States."



**The M-109 self-propelled howitzter is a U.S.-designed weapons systems that has been produced by Israel.**

Despite these various dangers, the U.S. government has failed to develop a coherent policy framework regarding the export of arms production technology, and continues to treat such transactions as an ancillary feature of ordinary weapons sales. Thus, while proposed sales of military technology are usually evaluated in terms of their likely contribution to U.S. and allied military strength, they are rarely assessed in terms of their impact on regional arms races or on U.S. trade competitiveness. As a result, such arrangements have proliferated with little congressional or public discussion.

The U.S. policy of providing technical assistance to the arms industries of friendly nations was first instituted in the early Cold War era, when Washington sought to bolster the West's overall military-industrial capability. Ironically, the first beneficiaries of these efforts were Germany and Japan—states whose arms factories had only recently been targets of U.S. bombing campaigns. In order to mobilize the industrial might of these countries in the global struggle against communism, Washington helped to engineer the reconstitution of such noted military producers as Messerschmitt and Mitsubishi. Similar aid was also extended to military firms in France, Italy and Great Britain.

Later, in the early '70s, Washington extended this practice to key allies in the Third World. The first such arrangement was established with Israel: under the Master Defense Development Data Exchange Agreement of 1970, the United States agreed to provide Israel with technical data on a wide range of U.S. military technology in developing arms for domestic production. Indeed, by 1983, the General Accounting Office (GAO) could report that "almost every Israeli arms production effort includes a U.S. input."

Closely following the U.S. effort in Israel was a parallel endeavor in Iran. Following a visit to Teheran by then-President Richard Nixon in May 1972, the U.S. government promised to supply the shah with "virtually any weapons system which it wanted" (to quote a 1976 Senate report), and to assist in the development of an Iranian arms industry. The shah thereupon ordered large quantities of U.S. weapons (including 600 combat planes, 550 helicopters and 25,000 anti-tank missiles) and commissioned prominent U.S. arms firms (including Hughes, Westinghouse and Bell Helicopter) to establish modern arms factories on Iranian soil. Few of these arms factories had entered full-scale production by January 1979, when the shah was overthrown; they did, however, lay the groundwork for the subsequent development of an indigenous arms-making capability in Iran.

The next targets for U.S. technological assistance were South Korea and Taiwan. In accordance with the "Nixon Doctrine," which called on friendly Third World states to assume greater responsibility for their own defense, Washington helped these two countries to establish domestic arms facilities. U.S. defense contractors were encouraged to initiate coproduction ventures with newly established arms firms in these countries, and the Department of Defense provided technical data on a wide range of U.S. military systems. As a result, South Korea and Taiwan have become significant producers of major military systems, including tanks, artillery, missiles, ships and aircraft.

The extent of U.S. involvement in the development of arms industries in these countries cannot be underestimated. To give an indication of U.S. participation, consider this GAO list of "technical data packages" for the production of arms supplied to South Korea by the U.S. military in the '70s and '80s: 105-mm. howitzer; 155-mm. howitzer (M-114A1); 106-mm. recoilless rifle (M-40A1); 90-mm. recoilless rifle; 60-mm. and 81-mm. mortars; 8-inch projectile;



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155-mm. projectile; 20-mm., 30-mm., 40-mm., and 90-mm. ammunition; 50-cal. ammunition; M-18A1 anti-personnel mines. In addition, the United States has provided South Korea with technical data on the production of selected aircraft, helicopters and armored vehicles.

More recently, the United States has embarked upon a similar effort in Turkey. Eager to keep Turkey in the Western orbit and to reward Ankara for its support of Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. government has approved a wide variety of coproduction ventures with arms firms in that country. In addition to those projects mentioned above, this effort included armored infantry fighting vehicles, electronic warfare systems, unmanned air vehicles and radar systems.

On a smaller scale, the United States has assisted in the development of domestic arms industries in Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia and Singapore. All four of these countries produce at least some U.S. weapons (or weapons components) under license from U.S. firms, and all have received technical assistance of one sort or another from the United States. (See table in accompanying story.) Similar arrangements of this sort have been discussed or are likely with Brazil, Chile, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Thailand.

The United States is not, of course, the only country to provide such services to Third World countries. France and Britain have long been engaged in similar activities, as have a number of other European countries (including Germany, Italy and Spain). The former Soviet Union also sponsored a number of major coproduction operations abroad (most notably in India), but was generally less inclined than the West to export its technology in this fashion. Now, with the Soviet system abolished, Russia is attempting to expand its military-industrial links with a number of rising Third World powers, including China, Israel and South Korea. The United States is, however, the principal supplier of military technology to the Third World and is likely to remain so for the indefinite future.

As the 21st century approaches, more and more Third World countries are likely to establish modern arms industries, while those already in possession of such capabilities will strive to produce weapons of ever increasing sophistication. Because these countries lack some of the technologies they need to realize these objectives, they are likely to turn to the United States (and the other major arms producers) for the necessary inputs. Washington will thus be faced with a series of critical decisions regarding the export of advanced military know-how.

Advocates of technology transfers argue that coproduction and licensing agreements of this sort serve to strengthen the U.S. ties with the countries in question, and provide Washington with a degree of leverage over their military behavior. Technology transfers are also described as a necessary *quid pro quo* for weapons sales considered vital to ailing U.S. arms industries. On this basis, the U.S. government continues to approve major sales of military technology to emerging arms producers abroad.

But a rigorous assessment of past and pending U.S. technology transfer programs would suggest that such activities can have harmful consequences for U.S. security and economic well-being.

Historically, U.S. aid to military industries in Western Europe has contributed to the development of multiple centers of high-tech arms production, many of which are now competing with U.S. firms. Washington's aid to military firms in the Third World has not as yet resulted in intense competition with U.S. arms makers, but that day will surely arrive. Already, Israel is selling a wide variety of U.S.-inspired munitions to other Third World countries, and South Korea is gearing up to do the same. In the future, such states as Argentina, Singapore, Taiwan and Turkey are also likely to compete with U.S. firms in major world military markets.

The emergence of multiple centers of advanced military production in the developing world will affect U.S. security in many ways. To begin with, it will make it easier for belligerents to obtain the weapons and ammunition needed to sustain protracted, high-intensity combat operations. This was clearly evident during the Iran-Iraq conflict, when both Iran and Iraq acquired billions of dollars worth of tanks, artillery and missiles from such suppliers as Brazil, China, South Africa and the two Koreas.

Moreover, as the number of arms suppliers increases, the competition between them will intensify. This will make it easier for nations subject to U.N. arms embargoes to evade such restraints—a situation already evident in the former Yugoslavia, where weapons made by a number of Third World producers have shown up in the hands of the various warring factions—and for non-state actors of all sorts (guerrillas, insurgents, armed clans, and so on) to build up their military supplies.

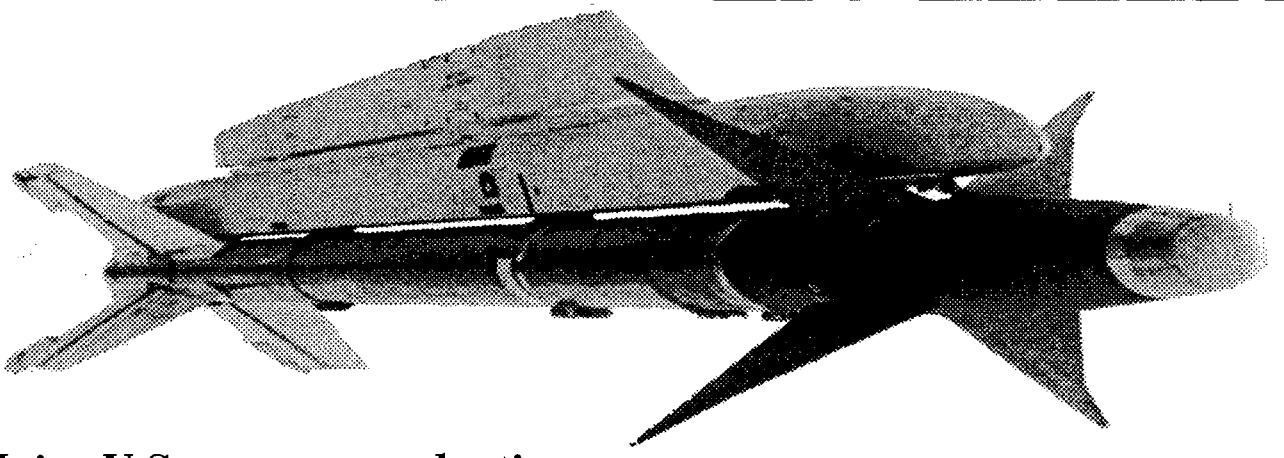
Furthermore, the emergence of major *conventional* arms industries in areas of conflict will increase the perceived threat faced by regional states and fuel the desire of at least some states to acquire weapons of mass destruction. This is already evident in south Asia and the Korean peninsula, where the buildup of conventional arms capabilities by India and South Korea has helped to drive intensified efforts by Pakistan and North Korea, respectively, to acquire nuclear weapons.

Finally, the introduction of U.S.-style military-industrial complexes to Third World countries will have profound and unpredictable effects on the domestic economy and polity of those societies. Some analysts assert that the introduction of high-tech military industries can be a spur to development. But others, noting the U.S. government's own emphasis on military over domestic spending, argue that such enterprises tend to squander scarce technical and financial resources that could otherwise be used to support critical health, educational and civic initiatives. In many countries, moreover, the military is deeply involved in national arms-production operations, and is hostile to any civilian efforts to shift funds

*Continued on page 19*



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# Major U.S. arms coproduction and licensing agreements with Third World countries

| Country | Weapon | Date of Agreement | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | Model-412 helicopter | 1991 | Under license from Bell/Textron Canada, a subsidiary of Bell Textron USA |
| Egypt | M-1A1 tank | 1988 | Deal worth $2 billion |
| | AIM-9P Sidewinder AAM | 1988 | 1,121 completed by end of 1992 |
| | AN/TPS-63 radar | 1986 | $190 million deal; 8 supplied direct |
| Indonesia | Model-412 helicopter | 1982 | Under license from Bell/Textron Canada, a subsidiary of Bell Textron USA |
| Israel | M-109 SP howitzer | 1985 | |
| South Korea | F-16 fighter | 1991 | 12 to be supplied direct, 36 in kit form; rest to be produced in Korea under license from Lockheed |
| | UH-60P Blackhawk helicopter | 1990 | Under license from Sikorsky |
| | Model-500MD helicopter | 1976 | Also producing 520 and 530 models under license from McDonnell Douglas |
| | K-1 tank | 1980 | Based on U.S. design |
| | KIFV infantry fighting vehicle | | Based on U.S. design |
| | M-109 155-mm. howitzer | 1990 | Deal worth $260 million |
| | KH179 155-mm. howitzer | | Based on U.S. M-114A1 |
| | M-176 Vulcan anti-aircraft gun | 1986 | 66 delivered by end 1992 |
| Taiwan | A-1 Indigenous Defensive Fighter (IDF) | 1982 | Designed with technical assistance from U.S. |
| | TFE-1042-70 jet engine (for IDF) | | Built under license from Garrett |
| | FFG-7 class missile frigate | 1989 | Built with U.S. technical assistance |
| | Brave Tiger tank | 1984 | Based on U.S. design |
| Turkey | F-16 fighter | 1984 | Built under license from Lockheed; 114 produced by end of 1992; 40 to be sold to Egypt |
| | F110-GE-100 jet engine (for F-16) | 1985 | Parts produced under license from General Electric |
| | UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter | 1992 | First 45 to be supplied direct; all subsequent to be produced in Turkey under license from Sikorsky |
| | MLRS launchers | 1988 | Also entails production of 36,000 MLRS rockets |
| | Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle | 1988 | 311 delivered by 1992; deal worth $1 billion |
| | Stinger anti-tank missile | 1989 | |

Abbreviations: AAM = air-to-air missile, MLRS = Multiple Launch Rocket System, SP = self-propelled

**At present, U.S. firms and the U.S. government are actively involved in military production operations in a dozen or so Third World countries. It is impossible to produce a comprehensive list of these ventures because the U.S. government does not release detailed data on overseas military coproduction and licensing activities. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some of the major programs by consulting trade publications and other open sources.**

**To provide a rough picture of U.S. military production efforts in developing nations, I prepared the above table of major projects, using data obtained from the *SIPRI Yearbook* (published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, and other public sources. This table lists 24 major projects in seven countries, involving jet fighters, helicopters, tanks, armored fighting vehicles, artillery systems, aircraft engines and guided missiles.**

**This is only a partial listing of such projects, identifying some of the larger and more prominent operations that have been discussed in Congress or the military press. Missing from the list are a vast number of smaller projects involving light weapons, artillery shells, electronic systems and aircraft components. Also missing are technical assistance agreements under which U.S. arms companies provide engineering support to military firms in foreign countries. A complete list of all such activities would undoubtedly contain hundreds of individual operations.** -- M.T.K.



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*Continued from page 17*

to non-military projects. This often leads to brutal military intervention in domestic politics and the suppression of democratic forces.

But increased international instability is not our only worry. As noted by the OTA in *Arming Our Allies*, the governments of Western European and East Asian states have consistently sought from the United States those technologies that could best serve their *commercial* as well as their military interests. In particular, they have sought duel-use technology in the aerospace, communications and electronics fields that could be employed in the development of civilian products intended for international markets. Thus, Washington has unwittingly contributed to the development of world-class competitors in precisely those areas where the United States had long enjoyed a significant advantage.

Again, the process of diversion to civilian industries is less advanced in such Third World producers as Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan than in the older centers of military production. But these countries are also pursuing a strategy like that employed by Germany and Japan after World War II and are seeking dual-use technologies for application to civilian products. These countries have already begun to erode U.S. dominance in the production of consumer electronics, and are likely to prove far more potent competitors in the 21st century.

For all of these reasons, it is apparent that the United States needs to pay much closer attention to the dangers associated with technology transfers to overseas arms producers, and impose rigorous controls over the export of key military technologies. At the very least, such measures should include:

- Advance notification to Congress of all military coproduction and licensing agreements worth in excess of $1 million, with provisions for a congressional veto in the case of inadvisable transactions.
- As part of this process, the mandatory submission of an arms control and international trade "impact statement" for all such arrangements, spelling out the likely consequences for regional and international security along with the potential impact on U.S. trade and domestic employment.
- The establishment of a special office in the State Department to oversee all transfers of military technology abroad, with participation from the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and U.S. trade officials.
- The mandatory inspection of all overseas arms production projects incorporating U.S. technology to ensure that the weapons involved are not being shipped to other countries without U.S. approval and to prevent unauthorized diversion to other industrial activities.

These measures, if adopted, will not prevent the spread of advanced military technology to overseas producers. But they could slow the rate of such proliferation and ensure that all future deliberations regarding U.S. involvement in such efforts take full account of long-term U.S. security and economic interests ◀

**Michael T. Klare** is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., and author of *American Arms Supermarket* and other books.

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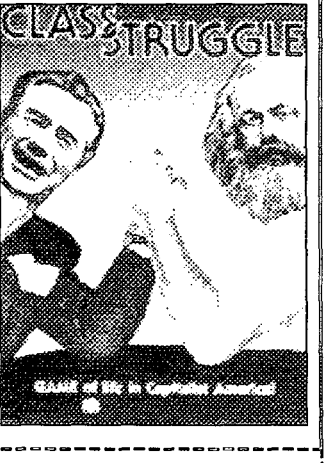
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THE PRESIDENCY

# Freshman follies

*It would have been hard for almost any president to succeed. And, for the most part, Clinton has not.*

By John B. Judis
WASHINGTON D.C.

Bill Clinton came into office with a mandate to "grow the economy." With Japan and Western Europe plunging into recession, the U.S. economy was mired in the second year of a "jobless recovery" and was suffering from a decade of financial excess and social decay. To make matters worse, Clinton, the first post-Cold War president, was charged with developing a new American foreign policy. He has had to confront the kind of bitter ethnic and national conflicts that fueled the last two world wars.

Clinton also has had to govern a public torn between conflicting priorities and ideologies. At home, Americans are distrustful of government activity and opposed to any increase in taxes, yet they favor government-guaranteed universal health insurance. Abroad, they are wary of U.S. intervention, yet anxious about America's standing in the world and concerned about human-rights violations in Asia, Europe and the Caribbean.

It would have been hard for any president to succeed—and, Clinton, for the most part, has not. In his first year, the former Arkansas governor has had a mixed record in domestic policy and a dismal one in foreign policy.

**Domestic policy:** Clinton's strength has been in focusing public and congressional attention on urgent domestic concerns, from worker education to health-care reform. A host of Clinton proposals—from earned income tax credits to pension reform and his health initiative—address workers' anxieties about disappearing jobs and falling wages. He has made the concepts of managed trade and industrial policy—*verboten* during the Bush and Reagan years—respectable in Washington.

This thematic achievement should not be underestimated or belittled. Clinton, if nothing else, has changed the terms of the debate. Imagine, by contrast, what the policy debate would have been like had George "Points of Light" Bush been re-elected.

Clinton did get some of his proposals through Congress. He obtained a credible deficit-reduction program. The deficit, predicted initially to remain above $300 billion through 1995, will be about $260 billion this year and drop below $200 billion next year. Passage of the program was an important feat. The deficit has helped keep long-term real interest rates, which have a big impact on private investment, stubbornly high in spite of the recession. Like inflation a decade ago, real interest rates have seemed to develop a momentum of their own, based upon psychology as much as finance.

Clinton's deficit cuts, along with his appointment of prominent Wall Streeters to high decision-making posts, broke the interest rate fever, bringing down long-term rates—and thus raising bond prices—for seven months. But this past October, interest rates began to creep up again, which suggests that the Clinton deficit program may be losing its credibility.

While acting on the deficit, however, Clinton postponed or abandoned most of his domestic agenda. When a plan to hike energy taxes proved politically unpopular, Congress and Clinton simply opted to cut spending on domestic programs. According to Todd Schafer of the Economic Policy Institute, real dollar spending on education and infrastructure will *fall* 1 percent from the Bush administration budget of 1993 to the Clinton budget of 1994. And according to the House Democratic Study Group, discretionary social programs grew from 3.3 percent of the gross domestic product in Bush's 1990 budget to 3.8 percent in 1993. Under Clinton, they will *shrink* to 3.5 percent in 1998.



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These cuts won't immediately affect everyone's income, but they will eventually threaten the nation's standard of living. For 30 years, obeisance toward the military industrial complex served as an unspoken U.S. industrial policy. Not only did America's Cold War military machine justify enormous spending on public works, research and education, but it also provided needed demand for jobs and goods. Now, instead of creating a new post-Cold war social-industrial complex, the Clinton administration and Congress are simply letting the public sector wither. As America learned in the '20s and again in the '80s, private industry won't take up the slack.

Clinton is only partly to blame for the demise of his program. True, he made tactical errors in Congress, choosing to placate conservative Southern Democrats rather than moderate Northern Republicans. (*In These Times*, Dec. 27, 1993.) But he would have faced an unrelenting opposition in any case, as both the Republican leadership and Ross Perot sought ways to improve their own political fortunes. In his next three years, however, Clinton will have to discover some way to rally support for his public investment agenda—or risk leaving the country poorer and less equipped to compete than when he took office.

**International economic policy:** Clinton greatly elevated foreign economic policy on the national agenda. After a decade of neglect—symbolized by Ronald Reagan falling asleep during a discussion of high technology trade policy—Clinton's new emphasis is welcome. Here, too, Clinton broadened the acceptable bounds of discussion. Initially eschewing free trade verities, Clinton advocated adding labor and environmental commissions to Bush's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Furthermore, he demanded that Japan meet certain "managed trade" objectives for imports of U.S. goods. But Clinton was, again, less impressive in practice than in theory.

Clinton strengthened NAFTA's environmental provisions, but allowed the labor commission to become a debating society without any significant power. The new president improved the Bush administration's negotiating strategy on the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), abandoning Bush's effort to rule out government research subsidies to industry. He also won minor concessions for some U.S. industries. In the end, though, Clinton negotiators simply agreed to remove the most thorny issues—from semiconductors to movies to airplanes—from GATT's reach.

Like NAFTA, GATT may be slightly better than nothing. Neo-isolationists Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader denounce the World Trade Organization that GATT establishes as a threat to American sovereignty and popular democracy. But they are overstating the case. Like the international organization that liberal economists envisaged after World War II, GATT is designed to mediate what might otherwise prove to be irresolvable disputes and to prevent the emergence of hostile trading blocs. In essence, GATT's World Trade Organization will be like the United Nations. At worst, it



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will waste money on decisions that member countries will ignore or get around. At best, it will prevent an economic rivalry from threatening currency breakdown and war.

Of more immediate import to the American economy than GATT and NAFTA is the U.S. trade balance with Japan. And in negotiations on that issue, the Clinton administration has proved as inept as its predecessor. At July's summit meeting in Tokyo, Clinton failed to win concessions that might improve things. Having initially demanded that Japan meet numerical quotas for ending its annual $50 billion trade surplus, the inexperienced Clinton negotiators, eager for any agreement that might signal success, agreed to amorphous "framework talks" that put the onus of change on both sides. This kind of approach has never worked in the past, and won't work in the future.

**Foreign policy:** In his economic policy, Ronald Reagan proved that it was possible to forget the lessons of the '20s and the Great Depression. In Clinton's foreign policy, he seems to be demonstrating that Americans can forget the lessons of World Wars I and II.

***Spending on education and infrastructure has actually decreased under Clinton.***

Both world wars erupted in Central Europe and were spurred by bitter national, ethnic and religious feuds. With the Cold War's end, these kinds of ancient rivalries have resurfaced in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and even in Germany. Judging from the past, the United States has a vital interest in containing the unrest. But the Clinton administration has not acted forcefully or even coherently in Eastern Europe.

True, Clinton got dealt a bad hand by the Bush administration. Bush and his secretary of state, James Baker, initially discouraged secession by Bosnians in the former Yugoslavia, calling instead for negotiations among the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. But Bush's prudent policy was undercut by Germany, which, rather than seeking a broader accord, precipitously recognized Croatia and Bosnia. As the Serbian cannons began to roar, Bush turned to inaction and equivocation.

Clinton promised to do better, but he has continued Bush's policy of drift and vacillation. During his campaign and transition, Clinton rejected negotiations aimed at partitioning, hinting that he would use American force to defend Bosnia's territorial integrity against the Serbs. But once in office, he backed down. Then in the spring, embarrassed by television reports of Serbian atrocities, he advocated a policy of "lift and strike"—lifting the arms embargo and using the air force against the Serbs. But after encountering predictable reluctance among European nations, Clinton backed down again. He eventually decided to support partition—but even then equivocated on its terms and on using American force to back it up.

In reality, the United States could not have restored Bosnia's sovereignty without a Desert-Storm like invasion—something Clinton never favored and the American public would not have supported. Lift and strike, as Robert Tucker and Paul Hendrickson argue in the current issue of *National Interest*, was a rhetorical gesture that unfairly raised hopes on the Muslim side. And partition couldn't be achieved without a willingness to use force against all parties.

Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher also drew an untenable distinction between American policy in Bosnia and American policy toward NATO. They justifiably argued that in the long run, European stability could best be ensured through the revitalization of NATO or the creation of an effective regional organization. But they believed that this could be done while allowing a major regional conflict to fester. NATO, they thought, could be restored by being redefined—the way a corporation is repositioned in the market. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

In addition, Clinton cheered on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs as they attempted to impose free market "shock therapy" on Eastern Europe. Asset fire sales, financial deregulation and the elimination of trade and investment barriers led to chaos and hardship—and precipitated not only the return of former Communists to power, but also the rise of virulent nationalists like Russia's Vladimir Zhironovsky. In December, faced with Zhironovsky's success, Clinton and Vice President Al Gore—over the objections of administration advisors—finally repudiated the IMF's strategy.

U.S.-China policy may turn out to be Clinton's other great blunder. (Not coincidentally, three major wars this century began in Eastern Asia.) The president wisely turned aside the demands of human rights activists, who wanted the White House to use trade sanctions against China. Such measures would simply give Japan an unchallengeable foothold in the Chinese market, without affecting China's internal policies. But in his eagerness to win market access for U.S. firms, Clinton went much further—bowing to China's insistence that Taiwan be regarded as part of China.

As James Mann recounts in *The New Republic*, the Bush administration had begun to edge away from Richard Nixon's policy of treating Taiwan as an international outcast. Bush's Taiwan tilt encouraged the leading democratic experiment in Asia—and also provided the U.S. with leverage to pressure China's internal and foreign policy. But the eager-to-please Clinton has gone back to Nixon's unfortunate policy.

Clinton's foreign policy has had some successes, but usually not because of anything the administration has done. The State Department, for example, did not broker the Israeli-Palestinian agreement. In fact, whatever finesse it has demonstrated in the Mideast can probably be credited to Bush administration holdover Dennis Ross rather than to



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the inept Carterites that Clinton brought back to power. In foreign policy, it's painful to report, Clinton and Christopher are the inferiors of Bush and Baker.

**Politics:** Clinton could fail to enact his domestic agenda and blunder on foreign policy, but still be re-elected. Conversely, he could contribute a positive new direction to the U.S. and the world, but still be repudiated at the polls.

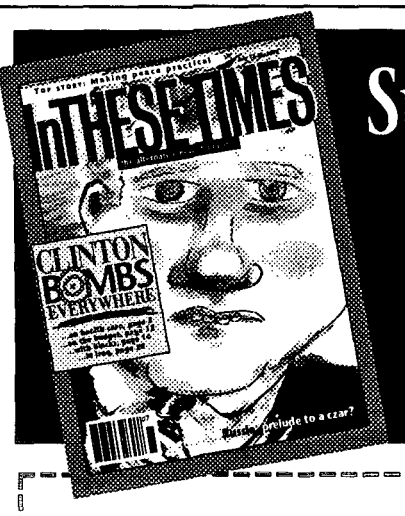
The actual record of a politician often doesn't matter. In 20th century American politics, success has largely been determined by how well candidates position themselves as the tribunes of a hardworking middle class. There have been liberal populists like Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson who have sought to unite the middle with the lower and working classes against the "economic royalists." And there have been conservative populists like Reagan and Buchanan who have attempted to rally the middle class against the upper-class elite and its presumed allies in the underclass.

During the campaign, Clinton clearly grasped the importance of middle-class populism—but as president, he initially defied it, with disastrous results. Clinton's abandonment of the middle class tax cut and his support for gay participation in the military may have been justifiable on economic and moral grounds, but they estranged him from the middle-class base he established during the campaign. So did his appointment of Wall Streeters, corporate flacks and lobbyists to high positions within his administration.

Nothing he has done since has bridged this gulf. The president refused to frame his tax increase as an assault against the rich, preferring instead to justify it entirely as a deficit-cutting measure. And after a promising start, he allowed the debate over national health insurance to degenerate into a technical discussion of costs and taxes.

Likewise, Clinton's advocacy of NAFTA and GATT won him kudos from Wall Street and the Washington media, but did not strengthen his support in bars and bowling alleys. According to a Sindlinger poll, the president's approval rating among stockowners jumped 6 percent after the NAFTA vote, but fell 5 percent among non-stockowners. Clearly, if the economy does not pick up significantly, Clinton and the Democrats could suffer a fate similar to that of Canada's pro-NAFTA Conservatives, who lost 153 seats in the October election. To weather such adversity, Clinton must rediscover the populist appeal he displayed during his campaign.

By the most optimistic measure, Clinton's first year resembled that of John Kennedy. Kennedy also failed to pass his program and blundered badly in foreign policy, but he eventually laid the basis for Johnson's domestic reforms. Even during his first year, however, Kennedy retained a common touch with voters. By a less optimistic measure, Clinton is Carter redux, a president of great intelligence who is incapable of steering a coherent course in foreign policy and who cannot communicate his complex domestic initiatives to Congress or the public. After a year, it's still too early to say which president Clinton will most clearly resemble. ◀


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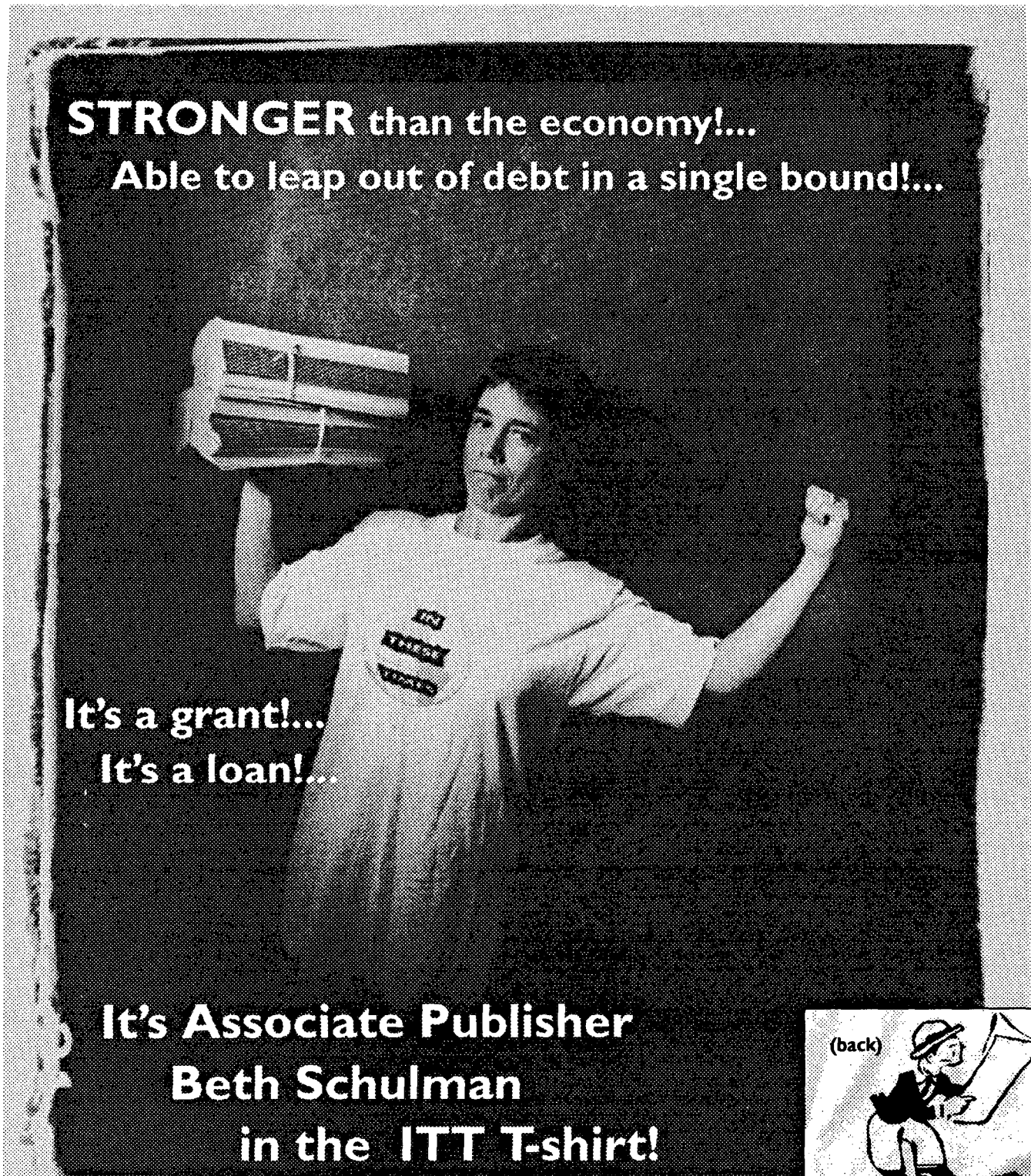



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LABOR

# Board games

*"I'm not resigned to the decline of unionism," says Clinton's nominee to chair the National Labor Relations Board.*

By David Moberg

In his first year in office, Bill Clinton and organized labor have agreed on some issues, such as family and medical leave, and fought on others, like the North American Free Trade Agreement. But Clinton has done virtually nothing to strengthen unions as institutions—even though they're critical for Democratic Party success and could advance Clinton's goal of a high-wage, high-growth economy.

Yet Clinton could improve his labor record through appointments to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the agency that decides whether employers and unions have committed unfair labor practices. Clinton has an unusual opportunity to make a difference quickly with the NLRB, since he can now appoint the board's general counsel and three of its five members.

The record of Clinton's nominees—led by NLRB Chairman-designate William B. Gould IV—indicates that the board may move to strengthen labor's ability to organize and represent workers. Yet Gould and the others may also promote labor-management cooperation in ways that some unions believe undermines real unionism. So far, Senate Republicans have blocked Clinton's nominees, claiming they're too pro-union, but a compromise may avert a threatened filibuster.

During the Reagan years, unions angrily attacked the NLRB for decisions that were heavily tilted toward management. The NLRB also acted slowly: the median time for deciding an unfair labor case increased from 133 days in 1980 to 300 days in 1989. That's significant, because in an organizing drive—when many employers violate the law and fire union supporters—justice delayed is justice denied. Unions increasingly gave up on the board. Some decided not to seek NLRB-sanctioned elections to gain official recognition, opting instead for direct pressure on employers to recognize a union without an election.

The labor movement's future relationship with the NLRB will depend in great part on the actions of Gould, the 57-year old great-grandson of escaped slaves and a highly respected Stanford Law School professor. As chairman of the NLRB, Gould would take the lead in interpreting and enforcing labor law, not making the laws—but his views could also influence any emerging labor law reform proposals. And there is enough leeway in interpretation of existing law that NLRB decisions make labor's job easier or tougher.

Although clearly sympathetic to organized labor, Gould has been a critic of unions—attacking their record on racial discrimination and advocating more internal democracy, such as direct election of officers. He has also advocated positions that many unions oppose, such as making it easier for employers to create non-union worker committees aimed at improving workplace performance.

With his academic prowess and his wide and varied experience, Gould seemed a safe, extremely well-qualified choice for board chairman. He would also be only the second black member and first black chairman of the NLRB. Yet despite praise for Gould from many attorneys who represent management, he has come under fire as being too sympathetic to unions. The attacks have come from ideologically anti-union groups—like the National Right-to-Work Committee—as well as from several Senate Republicans and major national business organizations.

"I am somewhat surprised at the nature of the opposition: that I'm a radical who's out of the mainstream," Gould said in a recent interview with *In These Times*. "That's ludicrous. I'm regarded as a centrist."

And in fact, some Republicans and business groups are not adamantly opposed to Gould. They simply want to



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make sure Clinton appoints one pro-management NLRB member who will write strong dissents that can be used in later court battles over NLRB decisions.

By tradition, the White House appoints members of the opposition party to two of the five five-year terms. Clinton is thus expected to name two Democrats and one Republican. He has nominated Philadelphia pro-labor lawyer Margaret A. Browning for one open seat and Frederick Feinstein, the talented chief counsel of the House labor-management subcommittee, for NLRB chief counsel. The Republican nominee is likely to be a woman from the ranks of either the Kodak or USX corporate legal staff.

These appointees will be under a chairman who has worked for both labor (the United Auto Workers) and management, as well as for the NLRB and as an arbitrator of labor-management disputes. As a professor at Stanford since 1972, Gould has written on employment discrimination, Japanese labor law and U.S. labor law, including his most recent book, *Agenda for Reform* (MIT Press).

While he supports collective bargaining and unions, Gould has argued against many leftist views of unions and the law. In *Agenda for Reform*, Gould maintains that the decline of unions is "profoundly worrisome" for democracy and pluralism. He sees a need to reform the law to better protect workers' rights. For example, he believes that employers should not be able to permanently replace strikers.

But Gould does not see labor law or even employer law violations as responsible for labor's decline. Labor law reform and a sympathetic administration would help unions, he argues, but unions need to organize more vigorously if they want to reverse their slump.



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**NLRB Chairman-designate William B. Gould IV**

Gould's basic premise is that a changing economy with growing international competition means not only that unionism is unlikely to spread but also that employee participation is increasingly important if U.S. businesses are to succeed in the global marketplace. In the absence of unions, he writes, the government should ease the restrictions against company unions—unions established, financed and dominated by employers—to permit more employee committees, as long as workers have autonomy and the right to choose their own leaders. He also believes that government will have to fill the vacuum left by the unions' decline with new legislation, such as protection against firings without good cause.

Despite his grim view of unions' future, he believes that the law should be changed to help organizing. He thinks the NLRB should be able to order employers to bargain if unions simply sign up a supermajority of workers (or even slightly less than a majority when the employer grievously violates the law). As things stand now, the NLRB acts only after a majority vote for a union on a secret ballot. Gould also believes that employers should be compelled to bargain with organized groups of workers—representing at least one-fifth to one-third of the workforce—even if a majority doesn't support a union.

Gould favors wide-open competition during union elections with fewer restraints on what management can say (or threaten), but also with guaranteed access to company property for union organizers. Such elections should be held quickly, he argues, and employers should be subject to bigger backpay penalties for violations.

Most of Gould's proposals require new legislation, but the NLRB itself can make a difference in a few areas. "The very first thing I'd like to accomplish is I'd like for the agency to deliver balanced decisions promptly and efficient-



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ly and for the agency to be aggressive seeking injunctive relief in federal district court, as it's authorized to do against violations by both sides," Gould says. He thinks injunctions could be especially useful in cases such as stopping employers from illegally firing pro-union workers during organizing drives.

Gould also wants to speed up the work of the agency by encouraging administrative law judges—who first hear labor law complaints—to devise informal methods of reaching a settlement between the combatants. He also hopes to establish "firm timetables for both election and unfair labor practice cases."

Yet Gould also wants to encourage labor-management cooperation. "To the extent that I can do so," Gould says, "I want to facilitate employee participation and involvement in both the union and non-union sectors." Gould rejects the view of many unionists that employee committees—referred to by a wide variety of names, such as quality-of-worklife or employee participation committees—are simply sophisticated new versions of outlawed company unions.

He concedes that "the driving force" behind some companies' decisions to set up employee committees might be to avoid unionization. "But," he adds, "I'm also sure that the driving force behind improvement in wages, hours and conditions of employment in non-union establishments is the very same thing."

"The basic problem," he continues, "is to break down the 'iron curtain' between employers and employees that makes it less likely that employee involvement and employee knowledge and employee input into decision-making can be facilitated. My view is that, in both union and non-union circumstances, we should be doing everything possible compatible with the law to promote employee communication, knowledge and involvement, even though the overall policy—as with improved wages—is to provide an alternative to unions." Dissatisfied workers, he points out, could shift allegiances from employer committees to unions, as some did in the '30s.

Gould favors cooperation mainly "because cooperation is a rational approach to the competitiveness problem that American industry is going to be increasingly confronting." Rather than promote adversarial relations, he argues, "the current law and the law as revised must do everything possible to enhance this, consistent with basic policies promoting autonomy for employees." Yet he acknowledges that cooperation is "no panacea" and that employers may later "stab unions in the back" or fail in the marketplace despite cooperative efforts.

Gould wants the board, as much as possible, to "enhance employee knowledge of corporate activity, to provide the widest information available to the employees." As things stand now, companies must disclose financial information if they claim they need concessions to avoid failing. But Gould thinks the board should seriously consider requiring disclosure when companies bargain on the basis of their needs to remain competitive. "The board is not obliged to fashion disclosure rules only in situations where the employer is going to go belly-up," he says.

Though there is a bias in Gould's beliefs—as there is in the basic Wagner Act labor legislation itself—toward collective bargaining and unionization, there is also a strong bias toward cooperation, arbitration and other models of labor relations that avoid conflict.

Most progressive labor theorists earlier in this century stressed the need for industrial or economic democracy. But Gould—like many contemporary academics and Clinton administration officials, including Labor Secretary Robert Reich—stresses employee participation, cooperation and involvement. Those are much weaker concepts that subordinate political and social ideals of democracy to a particular economic strategy.

A Gould board, nevertheless, would be likely to restore a measure of fairness and attention to worker rights to an agency that has too often in recent years been unfriendly to workers and unions. Yet without a renewed, massive effort by unions, even a more sympathetic board will make little difference.

"I'm not resigned to the decline of unionism," Gould says. "There could be a confluence of factors that provide revival, and it's possible more balanced board decisions and procedures could play a role in a union revival. But I'm very skeptical about the notion that the law on its own can provide that function." ◀

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WORLD POLITICS

# From Russia, without love

***How Vladimir Zhirinovsky rose to power—and what the West could do to stop him.***

By Vladimir Klimenko & Cynthia Scharf

Meet Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the controversial nationalist whose movement took 24 percent of the seats allocated for political parties in Russia's latest legislative election.

"You Americans have really driven your country into the ground," he told *In These Times* during an interview. "Soon blacks will take over all of America. Then you'll be asking *us* for aid."

Flamboyantly racist, the 47-year-old leader of the Liberal Democratic Party delights millions of fellow citizens with his perpetually agressive, goading manner. Listening to Zhirinovsky's spontaneous invective, one gets the impression that he is the voice of a troubled Russian subconsciousness, in which an imperial worldview has always coexisted with a barely concealed inferiority complex.

Zhirinovsky never passes up an opportunity to put in a plug for his 1996 presidential campaign. He promises to clean up Russia's chaos much the way Hitler mobilized Germans in the '30s. "I will solve our domestic problems through foreign-policy breakthroughs."

He boasts that among those "breakthroughs" will be the establishment of Russian ports on the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean as well as a full reconstitution of the old Russian empire, Alaska included.

"Who was it that discovered Alaska? The Russians!" Zhirinovsky said in an interview. "Meanwhile, where were the Americans? Rotting in Irish jails."

Who could vote for a man who makes such outrageous statements? History demonstrates that there are always people ready to put their hopes in a demagogue—be it Hitler, David Duke or Zhirinovsky—who blames hard times on others and dishes out cheap promises for a better future.

Like Hitler, Zhirinovsky rose to prominence with the help of the most conservative wing of the establishment. Three years ago, a bealeaguered bureaucratic elite plucked him out of total obscurity by inviting him to a series of well-publicized meetings with Communist Party bigwigs and the KGB chief. According to press reports, the goal was to discuss the formation of a "coalition government" between the ruling Communists and a handful of miniscule parties whose combined membership was less than a few dozen people.

Until that time, Zhirinovsky, a lawyer, was rumored by colleagues and others who knew him to have been little more than a small-time KGB collaborator with a big ego.

Evidently, those meetings were just a prelude to bigger things. In early 1991, Zhirinovsky declared his candidacy for the presidency of the Russian Federation. When his supporters failed to gather enough signatures to qualify him for the race, the large Communist faction in the now-deposed Russian parliament voted to place his name on the ballot.

His suprising 7.8 percent showing in that election made him a celebrity. Yet observers remained divided about his future prospects. Some thought Zhirinovsky was finished after publicly supporting the August 1991 coup attempt. Others believed that the world would see more of him in the years to come. Almost no one, however, expected his oddly named Liberal Democrats to receive as much of the party list vote as it did in the last election.

Certainly many of the ballots cast for Zhirinovsky's party, as well as for the Communists and other opponents of reform, were protest votes reflecting broad discontent with President Boris Yeltsin's economic policies. Harsh market reforms have left 35 million Russians living below the



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poverty level and fostered gross income inequalities. Nonetheless, Zhirinovsky's ability to attract one out of every four Russian voters can be attributed to more than just the birth pangs of economic reform. Zhirinovsky acts as a lightning rod for millions of people who are afraid and angry about the loss of Russia's superpower status.

Once a mighty empire feared and respected around the world, Russia today finds itself in a pitiful state of economic, political and psychological disrepair. The collapse of bureaucratic socialism and the de facto loss of the Cold War forced the country into deeper debt to its former rivals. Russian national pride has taken a severe beating.

Zhirinovsky's politics of resentment taps into the baser instincts of those Russians who feel humiliated and confused by the changes wrought by reform. Ultra-nationalists like him have been quick to play on those dark emotions, resulting in a xenophobic, racist message that blames all of Russia's ills on reformers, non-Slavic ethnic groups, foreigners and other convenient scapegoats.

At a rally outside the Kremlin last year, three Russian teenage girls with bright pink lipstick explained why they supported Russia's most notorious politician. "He is honest and sincere, unlike all the other politicians. He says what a lot of us really think. Zhirinovsky won't let Russians get kicked around—he stands up for Russians," said one girl.

One of Zhirinovsky's biggest advantages is that his hyperactive personality and blunt, get-tough message make him an attractive subject for TV. Alone among his rivals, Zhirinovsky has gotten the six-second sound bite down to an art. Russia finally entered the age of television politics during the last elections—and Zhirinovsky now has a legitimate stage for appearing on the nightly news. He can thus increase his own visibility should he actually run for president in 1996.

While Zhirinovsky opposes President Yeltsin on nearly every issue, it is no accident that during the campaign he supported Yeltsin's constitution. Russia's new constitution gives the president immense powers. In Yeltsin's hands it is perhaps a good short-term solution to Russia's woes. However, the same constitutionally mandated executive powers in the hands of Zhirinovsky or some other potential extremist could cause a global nightmare.

Russia's economic performance in the next few years will be the key factor in whether democracy succeeds or fails to take root. The United States would be well advised to pursue a more active role in resucitating Russian production. For the past two years, Yeltsin's government has risked its political survival by pursuing austerity policies recommended by the World Bank and the IMF. While such measures may be justified in order to upgrade and eventually rejuvenate the economy, they impose heavy social and political costs for the country. (See *In These Times*, Dec. 13, 1993.)

As it stands, Russians still haven't seen much of the aid promised to them by the United States and other developed nations. Some of it was never sent while other large chunks disappeared into some bureaucratic black hole or into the pockets of U.S. consultants and exporters. This only increases popular skepticism about reform. It also fuels Zhirinovsky's brand of nationalism.

The United States and other Western nations could make a concerted effort to direct investment capital into industries that show promise, preferably ones that have been privatized by a combination of investors and workers' collectives.

For example, in the '30s Ford helped the Soviet Union build one of its first automobile and truck factories. Today, U.S. money could be used to build mini-tractor plants in Russia's dying rustbelt cities—which have become strongholds of support for Zhirinovsky. Such a move would simultaneously provide jobs for underemployed workers, help struggling family farmers to expand their numbers and increase crop yields, and reduce people's enormous grocery bills by lowering the price of food. It would also save the state hard currency for other pressing needs such as medicines and social services.

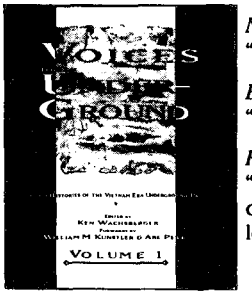
A strategy of this kind would require vision, courage and determination on the part of the United States and its allies. The absence of such qualities, however, would offer passive encouragement to irreconcilable extremists who flourish in times of profound social crisis.

**Vladimir Klimenko** and **Cynthia Scharf** are former *In These Times* Moscow correspondents.

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IN THE ARTS

# And the bland played on

## *Hollywood makes a nice, clean AIDS movie.*

By Pat Dowell

*Philadelphia* is one of those political baby steps that Hollywood occasionally takes amid much fanfare about "bravery" and "firsts."

It's the first feature film about a person with AIDS—but only if you count just Big Hollywood Movies That Play in Theaters. Otherwise, you'd notice that cable television weighed in this year with the AIDS mini-series *And the Band Played On*. Or that in 1990 the widely seen (and independently distributed) drama *Longtime Companion* chronicled the first decade of AIDS and earned an Oscar nomination for supporting player Bruce Davison. Or that almost a decade ago, in the TV movie *An Early Frost*, Aidan Quinn played a lawyer facing AIDS and the wrath of his homophobic father.

But those weren't *real* movies, with stars like Tom Hanks and directors like Jonathan Demme, fresh from his Oscar-winning hit, *The Silence of the Lambs*.

In *Philadelphia*, Hanks is another attorney with AIDS, but his father is terrifically supportive. It's Andrew Beckett's employers, at a powerful law firm in the City of Brotherly Love, who react with horror and a pink slip when they notice a lesion on his forehead. He decides to sue, but the only lawyer who'll take his case (and he needs some persuading) is an ambulance-chaser named Joe Miller, played by Denzel Washington.

Miller is a garden-variety homophobe himself, when he thinks about it. But, as you might guess, by the end of the movie he will have had a change of heart—as apparently, the filmmakers hope, will that great vague public out there in the dark of the multiplex.

*Philadelphia* is clearly a movie with a mission—which, to give the film its due, is a rare thing in the big-box-office sweepstakes. Jonathan Demme has filled the screen with closeups of people looking directly into the camera as they talk to each other, addressing the viewer as though eager to buttonhole anyone in the room. Warmly performed by Hanks and Washington, directed with sober and slightly odd intensity by Demme, it has several genuinely moving moments—such as the courtroom scene in which Miller eloquently asserts that this case is really about America's fear and loathing of homosexuals.

Like so many liberal "problem" movies, however, *Philadelphia* displays the absurd effects of trying to tailor its "problem" to what Hollywood perceives as the limits of public tolerance. Ultimately, such movies provide a tacit reinforcement of the very notions they aim to discredit. Think of it as the Oxbow Incident Syndrome. The *Oxbow Incident* is a celebrated 1943 western about a lynching, in which the evil of the deed was certified by the fact that the lynchees were innocent of the crime they swung for. In essence, this classic piece of liberal agitprop condemned not so much lynching itself as lynching the *wrong guys*.



**Philadelphia**
Directed by
Jonathan Demme

*Philadelphia* suffers from a similar intellectual short-circuit in laying out the unchallengable goodness of its hero. Ron Nyswaner's screenplay tries to construct an airtight case to win middle America's tolerance for homosexuals. Thus, Andrew Beckett is fashioned as the



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Photos by Ken Regan/TriStar Pictures

gay who could come to dinner. He's affluent, he's kind, he's a solid professional man, he's monogamous—not to mention that he's Tom Hanks. His longtime companion is the utterly devoted Antonio Banderas, and his family—Mom (Joanne Woodward) and Dad and all the married brothers and sisters with their kids—are impeccably tolerant and angelically nurturing.

Furthermore, although one of the bigoted lawyers is rebuked for feeling compassion only for those who have contracted HIV "through no fault of their own," the movie goes to some lengths to establish what look very much like ameliorating circumstances for Beckett. It is revealed that he had anonymous, unprotected sex in a porno theater, *just once*. (For that matter, he's hardly a sexual character at all, and never even kisses Banderas.) You have to wonder, would he be less "deserving" of our warm fuzzies if he weren't a paragon? In other words, the movie inadventently seems to say, they're lynching the wrong gay.

Liberal timidity and calculation afflict other characters in the story. The woman attorney who defends the law firm (Mary Steenburgen) is allowed to slip off the hook after cross-examining a weakened Beckett, when she mutters to herself, "I hate this case." This sop to feminism is the kind of stuff that gives political correctness a bad name. And Denzel Washington, as the homophobic African-American, is a whipping boy in almost the classic sense. He's made to take the ideological punishment for the white homophobes who most certainly outnumber and outpower black homophobes in America. Liberals love to lecture the oppressed about oppression.

But making the homophobe attorney an African-American does offer Demme and screenwriter Nyswaner structural advantages. It gives them a means of drawing a discreet parallel in the way prejudice is experienced by both African-Americans and visible gays. Miller decides to take the case only after he observes a library employee trying to nudge sniffling, haggard-looking Beckett, who has asked for AIDS precedents in the stacks, into a private room away from other researchers. You can see the dawning recognition in Washington's face.

Totally unredeemable are the old white men on the other side, particularly that scowling embodiment of smug patriarchy, Jason Robards. Director Demme has some of his best moments early on, storming in close on the old boys who run the law firm. The camera swims among them as they gladhand each other, zeroing in for feverish closeups on the elaborately non-sexual physical contact, the handshakes and claps on the shoulder that cement the old-boys network.

Beckett is a part of that boys' club, so long as he conceals himself, but *Philadelphia* is not concerned with that paradoxical aspect of a gay man's life. In fact, it is concerned almost exclusively with a gay man's death. *Philadelphia* pitches its plea (and it is a plea) in the arena most comfortable for homophobes, who see AIDS as the visible sign of homosexuality and its inevitable outcome.

The movie solicits compassion for a good man afflicted with a condition that will kill him. *Philadelphia* may well enhance the public's awareness of AIDS prejudice, but, for all its good intentions, it handles homophobia and gayness with rubber gloves. ◀



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IN PRINT

# Gold Rush

**By Leora Tanenbaum**

Rush Limbaugh's new book, *See, I Told You So*, is as much a self-help manual as it is a political manifesto. The combination is surprising, because the discourse of self-help is typically apolitical. As Wendy Kaminer argued in *I'm Dysfunctional, You're Dysfunctional*, people generally tend to analyze their personal problems without connecting themselves and their situation to the society within which they reside. Limbaugh, however, adds a conservative twist to the self-help subculture, offering concrete, politicized remedies for the disheartened. "I am a recent convert to the power of an optimistic, self-reliant outlook," Limbaugh confesses. "I've heard all the motivational speakers and for many years I thought they were a bunch of kooks or simply charlatans out to make a buck." Now he's come around.

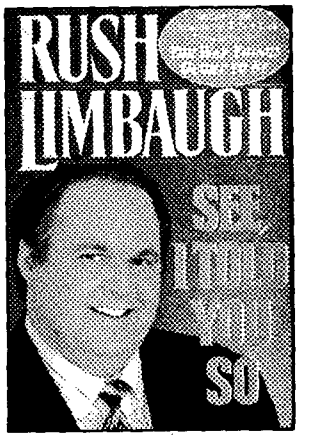
Limbaugh's "prescription" for success is simple: "Self-reliance. Morality. Personal responsibility. Optimism and good cheer. Confidence in the irrepressibility of the human spirit. Dependence not on the government, but on the universal yearning for freedom and the desire to make life better for oneself and one's family."

As in his first book, the bestselling *The Way Things Ought to Be*, Limbaugh gets personal. In between self-glorifying updates on his personal progress ("Let's see now: I've conquered radio, television, the newsletter business and the book world"), he offers his own bootstrap success story as a model for all Americans. Though born into a relatively privileged family of Missouri lawyers, Limbaugh presents his life as a Horatio Alger tale of pluck and perseverance. A college dropout, Limbaugh was fired from several radio DJ jobs before his big break at a Sacramento station. There he was discovered by radio bigwig Ed McLaughlin, who brought him to New York and ultimately to national fame.

"My story is nothing more than an example of the Original American Ethic: hard work, overcoming obstacles, triumphing over enormous odds, the pioneer spirit," he writes. "[I]f anybody knows that the American Dream is worthwhile, possible, justified, accessible and attainable, it is I."

Limbaugh's story is a political parable. Just as the self-indulgent fat person can lose weight by diligently counting calories and exercising, the downtrodden need only to exhibit the right attitude—and the structural barriers of racism, sexism and classism will simply *melt away*. Limbaugh devotes two pages of his new book to the feel-good story of Melvin, a black man who one day called his radio show to share with Rush and the world his triumph over negativism.

Before discovering Rush, Melvin had been a very bitter person, angered by the plight of blacks in this country and by what he saw as their unfair and bigoted treatment by whites. But this attitude, Melvin explained, had gotten him nowhere. Limbaugh's uplifting message helped him to realize "that his own negative attitude had been holding him back personally and in business. He admittedly was not nice to people with whom he worked and had a poor attitude toward his job. This was all due to his bitterness about and preoccupation with race."




**See, I Told You So**
by Rush Limbaugh
Pocket, 364 pp.
$24.00

**The Way Things Ought To Be**
by Rush Limbaugh,
Pocket, 315 pp.
$6.99

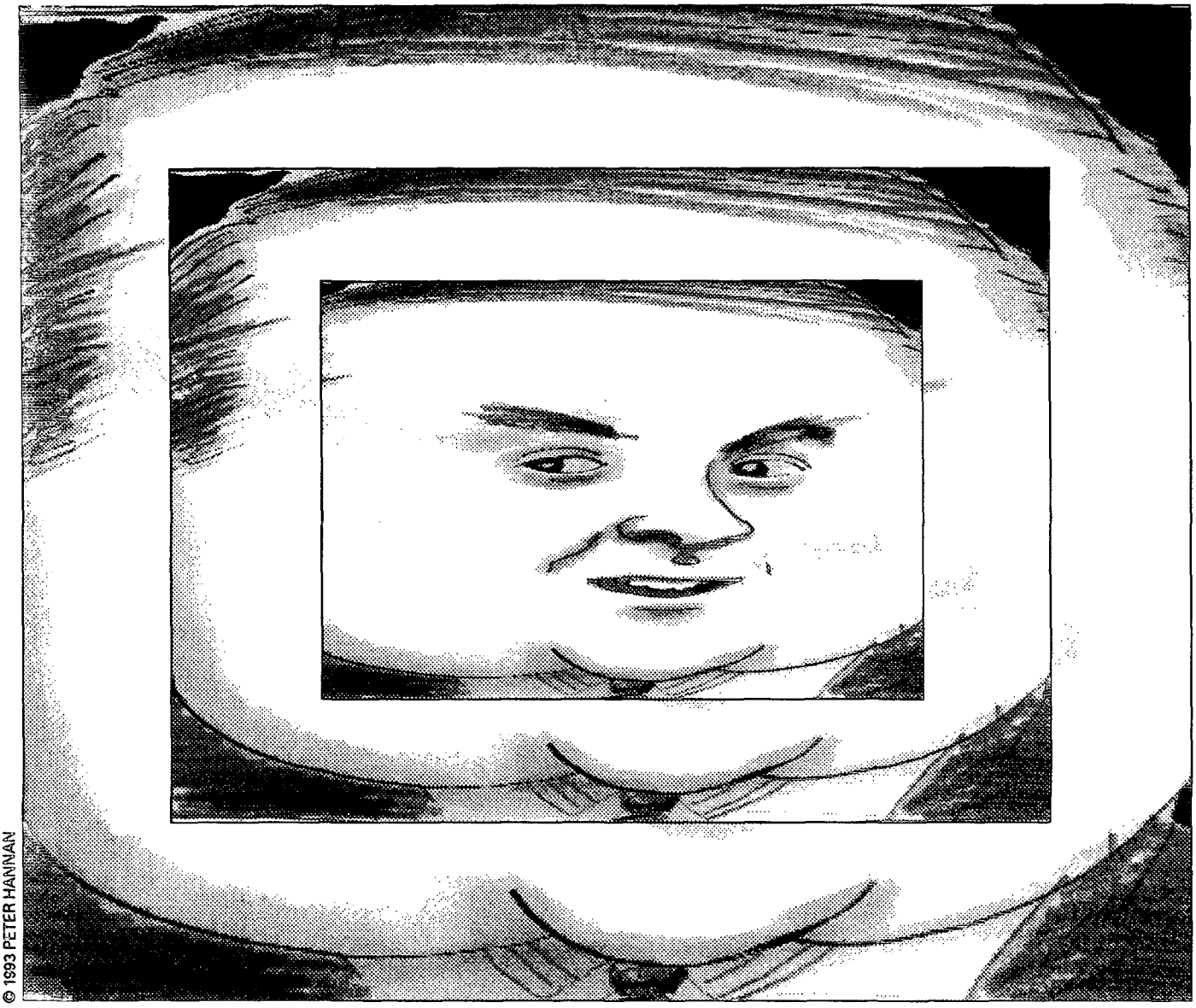
Melvin learned from Limbaugh that conservatism is not anti-black; on the contrary, it is race-neutral. Now that he had permission to shed liberalism without guilt, Melvin "adopted a totally new outlook on life: He is now positive, optimistic and happy. He has begun to treat his co-workers with more respect and his customers with kindness. As a direct result, he says, he has already received a promotion."

Despite his emphasis on individualism, Limbaugh does endorse one kind of collective action: partisan politics. His stated intention, in fact, is to win people over to the Republican Party. Most of *See, I Told You So* consists of patronizing explication of conservative ideology, written with the hope of appealing to Reagan Democrats. Limbaugh fetishizes the free market, faulting liberals for interfering with the workings of its invisible hand by artificially redistributing wealth. When the government creates programs or services for the allocation of resources, Limbaugh argues, it traps Americans in a cycle of dependency.

Besides, liberalism is is a real downer. "I'm also sensitive and sympathetic toward the troubles of other people's experience," Limbaugh writes. "But it would serve no constructive purpose for me to sit around and wring my hands every day over the disadvantaged, the poor, the homeless, the middle class and others. That would be the liberal thing to do."



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In any event, he maintains, the left doesn't *really* care about helping people; it is interested only in consolidating its own power. "As the spending mounts, so does the dependency of those receiving it, which the Democrats hope will translate into more and more appreciation of them by more and more voters," Limbaugh suggests. "Do you get the drift? Simply put, what is going on here is an attempt by the Democratic Party to transfer to the left as much as it can of the wealth, power and culture of America." So tax breaks for the rich are necessary economic incentives, but welfare is a crude attempt to buy votes.

Given that Limbaugh is prone to demagogic outbursts, it would seem impossible for him to gain credibility as a serious conservative pundit. But Limbaugh has finessed this tricky public relations dilemma with extraordinary success. He has clearly mastered the art of pandering—always a good way to win and keep friends. Limbaugh flatters his 20 million fans, declaring them to be enlightened and courageous. "You know who you are," he writes, "you are the ones who have the courage to face and believe the truth. You are the people who make the country work."

Because his fans have been so often denigrated, described as rednecks for gathering to listen to him with their meat-and-potato dinners in Rush Rooms across the country, Limbaugh consoles them: "The smug assumption that people who listen to my show are just too stupid to tackle America's complicated problems and that the country has to be protected from people like you is sheer arrogance [demonstrating] a genuine fear of your power."

No wonder Limbaugh is so popular. Roger Ailes, Limbaugh's TV producer, estimates that two-thirds of his audience agree with his ideas, which is why Limbaugh chidingly calls them "dittoheads." From his books and other ventures, Limbaugh has personally earned $5 million, an amount that will only grow: *See, I told You So* (or *SITYS*) had a first printing of 2 million, the largest in pub-



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lishing history. *The Way Things Ought to Be* (or *TWTOTB*) has already sold 4.5 million copies—an astounding figure for a non-fiction book.

In many ways the Limbaugh of the new book is not the Limbaugh of *TWTOTB*. Written when Bush was still president, the first book argued that a consortium of liberals, socialists, feminists, first-grade sex educators, historical revisionists and tree-huggers were slowly but surely imposing their will upon all Americans—while George Bush was betraying the Reaganite legacy with endless compromises and ideological moderation. The tone of *TWTOTB* was largely tongue-in-cheek; Limbaugh seemed less a political heavyweight than just an opinionated, loudmouthed talk show host. Throughout the book, he teased his readers about his intentions. "I am not into demonstrating my influence in politics," he wrote, disingenuously claiming to be a mere entertainer.

But since Clinton's election, Limbaugh has become more single-mindedly political. He has always presented himself as a dissenter, but now he plays the role of the anti-establishment rogue to the hilt. Others are happy to indulge his fantasies: *The National Review's* recent cover story on him was titled "The Leader of the Opposition." Though he criticizes liberals for wallowing in a bottomless pool of self-pity, Limbaugh himself claims to be marginalized. To Limbaugh, white, middle-class Americans are an endangered species engaged in a fight for survival against the hegemony of the left.

In order to be taken seriously by middle-of-the road Americans, Limbaugh has carefully packaged *SITYS* to appeal to those who have not yet seen the light. He's given up the explicit references to biblical doctrine that filled the pages of *TWTOTB* ("our morality emanates from our Divine Creator, whose laws are not subject to amendment, modification, or rescision by man"). He makes quasi-literate references to highbrow Marxist philosophers Theodor Adorno and Antonio Gramsci. And he now relies heavily on some Ross Perot-style graphs and statistics. (Limbaugh made sure to leave out footnotes, however, lest some nosy liberal journalist try to disprove his research.)

With two books and a TV program amplifying his radio voice, Limbaugh is only now coming into his own as the most widely-recognized "opposition" figure in the American media. And this is not all bad. While Limbaugh is astoundingly blind to differences among "liberals" (a catch-all label used to describe thinkers as diverse as Gramsci and budget director Leon Panetta), he does posess an acute hypocrisy detector. While his criticism of Clinton is often politically confused—Limbaugh skewers him for his purported "leftism" rather than for his obsequious centrism—he tracks the administration's machinations, and the president's ideological malleability, with humor and skill.

First and foremost, he exposes Clinton's frequent about-faces with cynical wit. In a powerful chapter, "Lies, Lies," Limbaugh juxtaposes various Clinton quotations to demonstrate how the president regularly speaks out of both sides of his mouth. From tax credits for the middle-class to Bosnian intervention to the U.S. relationship with Saddam Hussein, Clinton has taken popular stands only to renege on his promises when public attention was turned elsewhere.

When he takes Clinton to task for his policy on Haitian refugees, Limbaugh sounds almost progressive. In March 1992, while on the campaign trail, Clinton publicly denounced Bush for his regressive policies. "I think President Bush played racial politics with the Haitian refugees," Clinton said at the time. "I wouldn't be shipping those poor people back." Limbaugh relishes replaying Clinton's shameful post-election reversal.

Of course, Limbaugh never digs deep to reveal the administration's consistent centrism: such an admission would damage his all-too-seamless thesis about the purported leftist monopolization of the Washington power structure. In fact, Limbaugh and Clinton agree on many issues—NAFTA, capital punishment, workfare and parental consent for abortion, to mention just a few.

Nevertheless, Limbaugh is persuasive when he points out that many politicians have only minimal contact with everyday people and little understanding of everyday problems. Who can resist his cutting reaction to Hillary Rodham Clinton's fervent ramblings about the "politics of meaning"?

> Here's Hillary, in *The New York Times Magazine*: "You know, I'm going to start thanking the woman who cleans the restroom in the building that I work in. You know, maybe that sounds kind of stupid, but on the other hand I want to start seeing her as a human being." (This was said only days before President Clinton bombed an Iraqi intelligence building at 2 A.M., when only cleaning people would have been inside. Whatever else the bombing accomplished, we can rest assured that it is now more difficult finding good weekend custodial help in Baghdad.) This is our First Lady! It's as if none of the rest of us has respect for people who do custodial work. Decent people learn this when they're seven years old. She's just now realizing it at 46. What an admission!

Passages such as this make me momentarily forget how vacuous the rest of *SITYS* is. It can be hard not to be seduced by Limbaugh's humor—and a lot of people are being wooed. Limbaugh estimates that he will be able to influence the votes of 20 million people by 1996. He has developed a winning strategy, combining entertainment with earnestness, populism with egomania, and a New Age vocabulary with a serious commitment to party politics. Let us not fool ourselves with the belief that Limbaugh has just gotten lucky. ◄

**Leora Tanenbaum** has written for *The Nation, On The Issues* and the *Women's Review of Books*.



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# Going Underground

By Fred Little

*Voices from the Underground* is the most important book about American journalism published in my lifetime. That's a large claim, but *Voices* is a large book, in the expansive sense in which Walt Whitman used the term: 614 pages of Smyth-sewn alkaline paper, chock-full of testimonials by a group of writers who have a surer claim to Walt's mantle (both as poets and as small "d" democrats) than any 10 members of the Pulitzer Prize board.

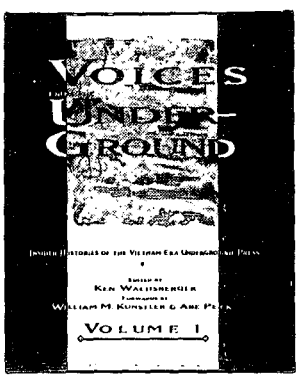
Though newspapers, television programs and a spate of recent books have used the 25th anniversary of 1968—Chicago-Bobby-Martin-Columbia—as a news peg on which to hang the '60s, once and for all, this book seems to have fallen into a black hole, unmentioned and unreviewed. Why? Because *Voices from the Underground* threatens every corporate media shibboleth about the malign influence of the '60s you've heard over the last 12 months. It's an essential book for anyone concerned with the history of the Vietnam era "underground press" and its transformation into the contemporary "alternative press." It traces as well the early stages of modern feminism, the first glimmerings of gay pride and its development into the queer rights movement, the rise of multicultural awareness, second-wave environmentalism and even the widely dismissed "New Age" movement.

It is typical of the revisionist mindset of our contemporary corporate media that the underground press and counterculture that spawned each other are not given well-deserved credit for incubating progressive social changes that even a Republican like Rudolph Giuliani would not for a moment consider reversing. Nor are they given credit for providing the model of anti-authoritarian popular culture that has sparked people's revolutions throughout the world in the last 10 years. It's far from an accident of history that Vaclav Havel's engagement with the West owes more to the late Frank Zappa than to the plump bureaucrats who occupy the offices of the United States Information Agency.

Although other treatments of this subject have appeared, generally focusing on individual publications or personalities, *Voices from the Underground* casts a broader net than any such work to date. Voices chronicles the transition of the alternative press from a narrow stance of political radicalism rooted in Marxist-Leninist thought to a broader cultural progressivism, deftly chronicling the internal tensions that arose between the economic and temporal demands of maintaining a regular publishing schedule, the political aims of what were—initially—mostly white heterosexual male underground journalists, and the rising demands by female and queer staffers that their concerns be treated as seriously as those of distant but oppressed Third World residents.

These demands led to a curious contradiction: at most underground papers, the consideration of the concerns of women, lesbians, gay men, Hispanics and African-Americans led to a demographic-based approach to issues and readerships that almost totally displaced the class-based economic analysis it should have reinforced. Even so, the first-hand accounts of the rise of racial, feminist, gay and lesbian awareness among "underground" and "alternative" staffers—and the editorial struggles that ensued—have relevance to a "mainstream" press which is, in many cases, only beginning to deal with those same issues.

*Voices* is, in its own way, an underground publication. On its long and tortuous route to the library shelves and the book stores, the book accumulated a stack of rave rejection notices from well-regarded editors at houses both large and small. Still, a rave notice is not a contract to publish. At length, a Michigan publisher (Pieran Press) agreed to produce the book, only to withdraw from the project late in the day, due to concerns about libel. Finally, a new company, Mica Press, was formed to publish the book.




Voices from the Underground: Volume I—Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press; Volume II—A Directory of Resources & Sources on the Vietnam Era Underground Press
Edited by
Ken Wachsberger
Mica Press
Vol. 1, 640 pp., $29.50
Vol. 2, 144 pp., $45.

The subtitle of Volume I is *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press*, and it certainly delivers the goods. Contributions from Peter Jensen of the Eugene *Augur*, Bob Hippler of the *Fifth Estate*, Sally Gabb of the *Great Speckled Bird*, Harvey Wasserman and Allen Young of *Liberation News Service*, John Woodford of *Muhammad Speaks*, Jack Smith of the *Guardian*, Marilyn Webb of *off our backs*, David Doggett of Mississippi's *The Kudzu* and many others. Volume II, a



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COLLAGE BY LISA WEINSTEIN

directory of resources, is a different ball of wax entirely, but no less essential. Given it's price—more than $40 a pop—it will be of interest primarily to historians, researchers and librarians. Included are an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources, directories of special collections on social movements evolving from the Vietnam era and a report on the current status and future prospects of microfilm/microform preservation of underground and alternative publications of the '60s and '70s. Without a doubt, academic researchers in the history of journalism, women's studies, gay and lesbian studies, American studies and popular culture will find it an essential research tool for years to come.

It should be acknowledged that *Voices from the Underground* has many of the flaws of its subject matter. The essays reflect not just the sense but also the sensibility of the underground press, which sometimes means only that they bridge the gap between exhilarating flights of verbal dexterity and stupefying rhetoric in a single page. But what rings true in every case, regardless of the literary quality—or lack thereof—of a contributor's effort, is a clear sense of the way in which passion, commitment and affordable tools produced the explosion of small weekly and monthly newspapers in the late '60s and early '70s.

In the '80s, personal computers and desk-top publishing software led to a similar boom in underground 'zines, defined not by demographics but by editorial vision. Now, as we creep up on the halfway point of the '90s, high-speed modems and data compression technology are coming together to do the same thing for alternative media—not just text, but audio and video too—that offset printing did for alternative writing in the late '60s. Already, essentially unmediated forums like UseNet newsgroups and Bitnet listserv operations provide the space for a lively and growing community of thinkers and doers to tackle many of the same issues addressed by the underground press during its heyday. Unfortunately, the fact that these services are not widely and cheaply available outside universities heightens already existing distinctions between information haves and have-nots.

As we move toward a defining national policy regarding the information superhighway, those of us who believe that the First Amendment is intended to ensure a maximum of information flow and access would do well to consider the testimonies found in *Voices from the Underground* and log on, sign in and print out. ◀

**Fred Little** was, until recently, a speechwriter for the Dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.



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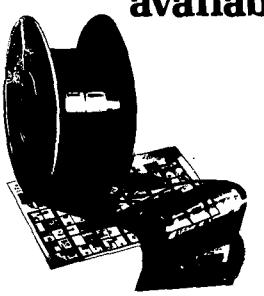
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*Continued from page 40*

riages were brief, and now Limbaugh lives alone.

He's a bit of an ideological pussycat as well. Though ferocious at a distance, Limbaugh often backs down when confronted face-to-face: appearing as a guest on *Nightline*, Limbaugh found himself at a loss for words when host Jeff Greenfield pressed him to define what—or, more precisely, whom—he meant by the term "feminazi." He didn't want to name names. Limbaugh showed a similar unwillingness to stand up for his loudly professed beliefs in the 1992 campaign. Beginning the 1992 season as an often harsh critic of Bush, Limbaugh endorsed Pat Buchanan in the primaries and later flirted with the idea of supporting Perot. But after meeting the president in person—he spent a night as a guest at the White House—Limbaugh found it impossible to keep up the criticism.

His biographer, Paul Colford, traces the roots of Limbaugh's personal uneasiness back to his experience as a high-school nerd. "Rusty was not an outcast, but he was introverted and shy," Colford notes. "He lacked confidence. He once hid in the backseat of a car so that he could steal a peek when a friend necked with a date up front—and thereby learn how to do it himself." And once, when playing spin-the-bottle with some high-school friends he faced the ultimate humiliation: one of the "prettiest girls" in the school, after watching in horror as the bottle spun and stopped in front of young Rusty, pointedly refused to kiss him. "And everyone in the room witnessed his humiliation," Colford writes. "It was a wound he would nurse forever after."

Would the history of American broadcasting have been different had little Susie (or whatever her name was) gone ahead and kissed the young Rush? Probably not. Limbaugh's narcissism seems to have more primal causes than his high school traumas. Limbaugh's father, a prominent local lawyer in Cape Girardeau, Mo., appears to have been a difficult and overbearing man, a staunch conservative not shy about expressing his views and perhaps imposing them on others. Little Rush admired his father, dutifully absorbed his politics, and struggled throughout his life to win from him a rudimentary respect. "Nothing was ever good enough for him, and I got very angry," Limbaugh says of his father, "but the desire to please eventually took second place to the desire to actually do my best." Well, perhaps. Limbaugh seems utterly conflicted about authority, gleefully assaulting powerful liberals (and insufficiently conservative conservatives), while at the same time setting up an idealized father-figure to worship, in the form of one Ronald Reagan.

Indeed, though Limbaugh is the most influential conservative ideologue in America, he seems to consider himself first and foremost an entertainer, more interested in personality (at least his own personality) than he is in politics. (He didn't even register to vote until after Reagan's re-election in 1984.) Perhaps we shouldn't consider Limbaugh a political figure at all, but a sort of postmodern Woody Allen—a troubled, if talented, entertainer who has managed to turn his psychological predicament into a source of art. ◀


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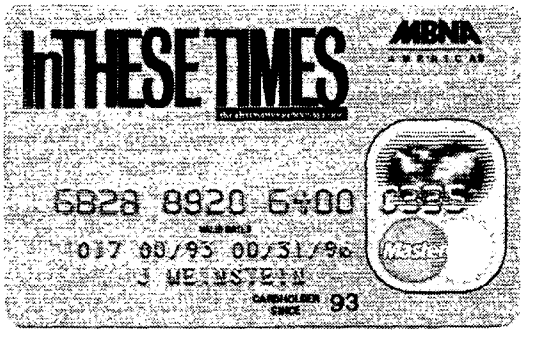
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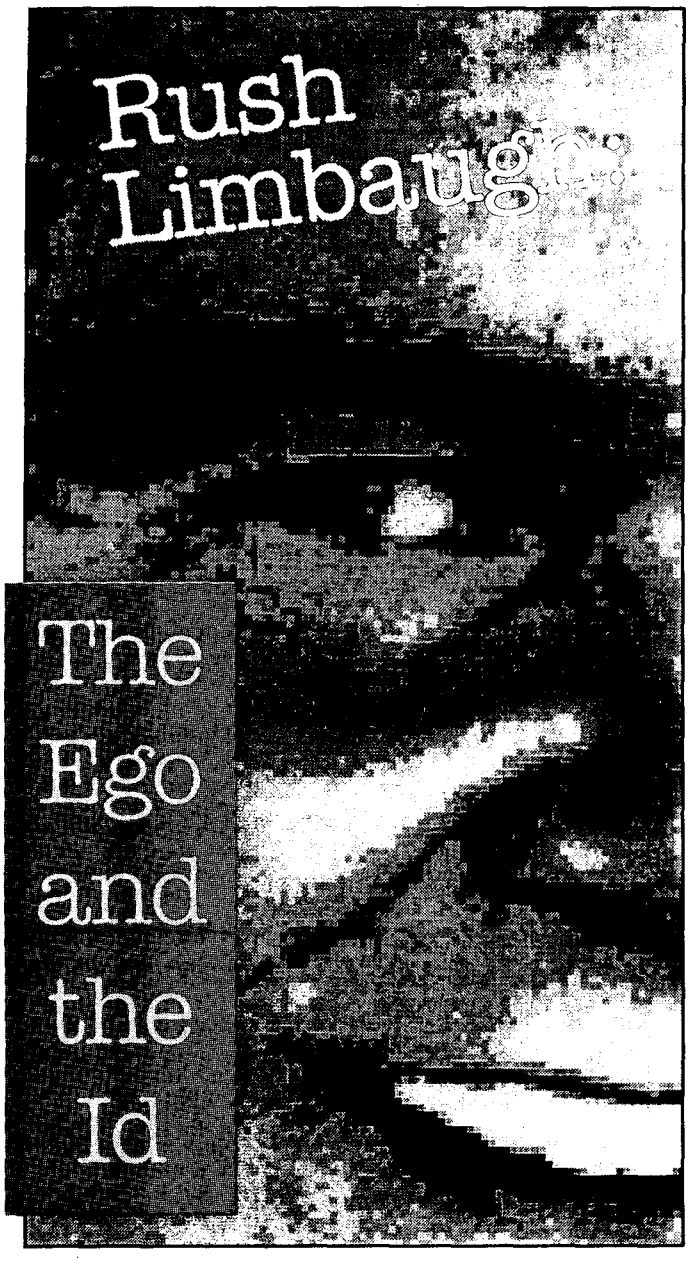
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IN THE END




**By David Futrelle**

Narcissism, in popular parlance, means little more than egocentricity. When Freud used the term, he meant something much more specific: narcissists are not so much overflowing with ego as perpetually insecure about their own worth, alternating (as cultural critic Christopher Lasch has noted), between "grandiose fantasies of omnipotence" and "feelings of complete insignificance and abject inferiority." Desperate for approval from others, the narcissist can develop an often sophisticated charm, combining (as Lasch notes) a "calculating seductiveness" with "nervous, self-deprecatory humor." Underneath this smooth exterior, maintained irregularly and with considerable effort, there lurks an inner emptiness. Narcissists are a bundle of conflicting energies: they long for idealized authority figures to whom to pledge their allegiance, yet they distrust authority, and despise themselves for their longing. Often intensely social, they are nevertheless deeply alone.

Rush Limbaugh is certainly a narcissist in the colloquial sense, a man seemingly overwhelmed by his own ego: on a typical episode of his half-hour TV talk show, he will devote one-third or even one-half of his time to talking, grandly and endlessly, about Rush Limbaugh, "a man, a legend, a way of life." At times his show sounds like nothing so much as a Rush Limbaugh infomercial: he plugs his books, his newsletter, even the new Rush Limbaugh calendar; he discusses articles about himself, replays things he's said on previous shows. He makes no excuses for this supreme self-indulgence, offers no apologies.

What he does offer, besides the self-serving bombast, is opinions — confidently expressed if not always logically argued — on topics as diverse as Amy Carter (ugly) and Chelsea Clinton (bad hair); from Desert Storm (good) to Health Care reform (evil); from Ronald Reagan (God) to Anita Hill ("My guess is she's had plenty of spankings, if you catch my meaning"). He has an audience of some 20 million, many of them enthusiastic fans, and occasionally speaks as though he is channelling the soul of the silent majority. But in his more candid moments he claims to speak for no one but himself; that, for him, is a grand enough goal. "This show is not about what America thinks," he frequently explains. "It's about what *I* think."

For someone who talks about himself nearly ceaselessly, however, he reveals in his comments very little of his interior life. Indeed, it's not clear how much of an interior life he really has. Limbaugh may be a narcissist in more than just the colloquial sense: his blustering exterior seems to hide a deep loneliness. A workaholic uncomfortable in social settings ("Rush was not a real people person," a former wife recalls), he has virtually no personal life away from his show, and seems uncomfortable addressing any group smaller than an abstract audience of millions.

In person, most observers agree, Limbaugh is awkward, and even self-effacing. Attacked by his critics as the "most dangerous man in America," Limbaugh seems to feel a vague guilt about his on-the-air aggression, describing himself (with complete sincerity) as "a harmless little fuzzball." He seems especially ill-at-ease with women. Though he speaks of women with a certain macho bluster ("I love the women's movement, especially when I'm walking behind it"), his relationships have been infrequent, difficult, and short; though he's been married twice, both mar-

*Continued on page 39*



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